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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

THESIS

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL VALUES  
in  
KARL BARTH'S TEACHINGS

by

Gerrish David Kingman  
(A.B., DePauw University, 1932)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Masters of Arts  
1934

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## INTRODUCTION

The following paper represents an attempt to study and evaluate a contemporary movement in Theology with the intention of discovering whatever value it may have to contribute to the theory and practice of Religious Education.

~~Because~~<sup>Because</sup> the Theology of Karl Barth is almost antithetical to the Theology upon which our system of Religious Education is based, it has seemed necessary that a study of the ~~Barthian~~<sup>Barthian</sup> Theology be made prior to any evaluation of his contributions to Religious Education. Consequently, the form which this paper has taken has been, first, to present an objective summarization of the fundamental principles of the Theology of Karl Barth; secondly, to present a critique of that Theology from the point of view of our own; and thirdly, to draw from these two sections the Religious Educational Values in Karl Barth's Teachings.

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*Barthian Theology*





The Position of Karl Barth

in

Contemporary Theology



There are two lines of English poetry that have caught some deep-seated fancy of mine, and that I frequently catch myself recalling as I think about some particular event in contemporary life which is of more than ordinary significance. They are from Wordsworth's Prelude, when he says:

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven!"

And I suppose that the reason why they have such an appeal to me is because they express so succinctly the poignancy of one who longs for a day when he feels that even he, caught in the vortex of rapidly changing events, would have felt aware, and in which even he could have felt the onward surge of evolving society and known himself a part of that movement.

Today many people, bogged by the <sup>weight</sup>~~wight~~ of enforced routine, exist in a sort of vegetative state which has no glamour, no vitalizing interest, and no creative stimulus. They rise early, work hard, eat enough to maintain their physical existence, - and go to bed facing a repetition of the same desultory routine on the morrow. Is it any wonder that cynicism becomes the philosophy of such people? Is it any wonder that life has little value or meaning for them, or that religion, even as an eschatological hope, ~~fails~~ to stir them? No, and the greater tragedy is that even the young people of the present time are pondering the same sense of futility in their breasts, and are themselves looking resign-

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edly to the past, with a futile gesture of the hand dismissing the present as though it were a becalmed spot in the stream of history. Even the life of a student becomes at times so tiresome, the enforced routine becomes so stifling, and the sedentary nature of research so oppressive to young bodies, that college students everywhere face times when they simply must throw over all work and seek release, a chance to breathe freely in one way or another. That is why even to them, those lines of Wordsworth's, as they look back upon some stirring historical event, well up in a full heart and they also cry out:

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
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But why? Are these times so becalmed? Are they so lacking in historical significance? Are there nowhere movements which are profoundly affecting the lives of the world? When Wordsworth cried out thus passionately, he was looking back to the days of the French Revolution, when men's hearts were quickened by cries of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity; when the democracy of Rousseau was blossoming into the flower of the French Republic. To the Romanicist, Wordsworth, that was indeed a time when to have been young would have been heaven. But the present day is even more significant if one but stops to consider the events that have taken place in the past few years since the World War, events that are at this very moment breaking into full bloom. No matter what the field of activity in which one may be most interested, in that very field epochal

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largest theological schools, and even in China and Japan theological students are avidly reading translations of the writings on which this new movement is based. A short time ago an entire issue of Zion's Herald was devoted to a discussion of the movement and its chief prophet, and in most of the more serious publications there have been articles appearing for the past five years on the same subject: Karl Barth and the Barthian Movement.

The newspapers of the world have for the past month carried articles on the present relation of the church of Germany to the Nazi government, and in particular on the opposition to the Hitlerites offered by a small group of Protestant ministers who alone of all the people in Germany have dared openly and unequivocally to voice vehement protest against Nazi domination of the church and the persecution of non-Aryans. Scientists, philosophers, educators, authors, artists - all have fled the country, preferring exile to persecution, and not daring to voice a protest until safely outside the boundaries of the Nazi power. But a small group of men their eyes wide open to the danger they were inviting, have banded together under the indomitable spirit of Karl Barth, and openly repudiated the policies of the Hitler regime: have refused to prostitute their high calling to political favor, and have invited persecutions rather than forsake their Christian principles. And the consequences? They alone have been able to force the Nazis to a retrenchment in policy;

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While this protest by the Pastor's Emergency Federation (the name by which this group of Protestant Ministers is known) does not in any sense mark the true theological significance of Barth, it does illustrate perfectly the effect of that theology on society through its absolutism and despite its transcendentalism. Consequently it does not seem amiss that discussion should be made of the conflict between the Third Reich and the minority group of Evangelical pastors who are opposing the domination of the Church by the State.

Following the Reformation the Protestant Churches have been until very recently State Churches. Each of the German States had its own Church, headed by the Prince ruling the State. This condition existed unchanged until about fifty years before the World War, when the Protestantenverein, Protestant Association, was formed which sought to unify the Protestant Churches. This work continued through the World War, and at its close there were twenty-eight

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German Protestant Churches. Four years later these Churches founded a federation similar in character to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in this country, but they retained their autonomy and remained distinct Church Bodies. Many attempts had been made to fuse them into a unit, but there was little progress made. With the rise of the Nazis to power, however, the unifying movement received further stimulation, and as a consequence there has, at last, for the first time in history, evolved a national Protestant Church. The Landeskirchen, the twenty-eight State Churches, became the Reichskirche.

This unification did not occur without a struggle and the present conflict between Church and State is a development of the differences arising in the unifying process. The leaders of this Reichskirche movement are the "German Christians" or Nazi adherents, and their allegiance to the Third Reich in all its principles is one of the chief causes for the present discord in the German Church situation.

"The German Christians believe that the principle of leadership, the Fuehrerprinzip, extends to all activities of human life and that the titular heads of the Church must be subject to the will and authority of the leader, Adolf Hitler. Extreme German Christians have suggested that the 'totalitarian' State can be a reality only after the Protestant and Catholics of the Reich have been united in a German Christian Church, of which Chancellor Hitler must be the leader." 1.

The significant insistence to be noted in this quotation is that of making the Church conform to the philoso-

1. Emil Lengyel - "Germany's Church Struggle Echoes Through the Reich." New York Times Section XX p.3. December 26, 1933



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phy of the 'totalitarian' state, 'it is here that the canker is to be found which has led to the present "Church struggle."

Two nations which seek to establish a 'totalitarian' State are Germany and Russia, and the procedure in each has been strikingly parallel.

In Russia the Communist Party is a small minority of the people. Consequently to maintain itself it must resort to the use of force in the subjection of any threatening upheaval; and to perpetuate itself it must enter upon a rigorous campaign of education and conversation<sup>ion</sup> of the population, present and future, to absolute faith and belief in the truth of its principles. To this end every activity of the Russian life must be guided by Communist doctrine, and every organization contributing to the knowledge of the people must become an instrument of the Government. Consequently the schools, theaters, radio, newspapers and other~~s~~ publications, have all been thoroughly purged of non-conformist material, and a rigid censorship established to make certain that only the virtues of Communism are advocated, the evils of all other politico-economic theories are avoided. Because the Church was conceived to be a handmaiden of corrupt politicians and the enemy of social progress it was eliminated as an institution in Russia. Thus does the 'totalitarian' state established and preserve its unity.

With the rise of the National Socialists to power just a year ago, a similar movement was instituted in



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"National Socialism aims at the establishment of a 'totalitarian state, into which the Gleichschaltung (unification, harmonizing) of which every social institution, educational, cultural, industrial, is to be assimilated. At the same time the political and other divisions of the several German States are to be assimilated into a unified Reich. The Church in Germany was envisaged as a public institution and inasmuch as it was also divided into separate churches in these states, it came within the scope of both these unifying processes. Not only, however, are these institutions to be thus brought into conformity along the lines of their own kindred traditions and affinities, but they must be greatly reshaped in their readjustments to a political and social theory, National Socialism." 1.

The goal of the Nazis is to make the Church, as "a public institution" merely an instrument of the State, and subject to its leader's control. Under orders from the Nazi Church-council, for example, every Church in the Schleswig-Holstein district begins and ends its service with a "Heil Hitler" salute between the pastor and the congregation! And, more seriously, the German Christians have sought to impose upon the Protestant group articles of doctrine aimed to further the "Gleichschaltung" of the 'totalitarian' state. The Prussian Synod even went so far as on September 6, 1933, to declare that

"He who is not of Aryan descent or who is married to a person not of Aryan descent may not be called clergymen or officials of the general church government. Clergymen or officials of Aryan descent who marry persons of non-Aryan descent are to be discharged,"

and

"Clergymen or officials of non-Aryan descent ~~or~~ who are married to persons of non-Aryan descents are to be retired." 2.

1. Macfarland, The New Church or The New Germany. P. 2.
2. Macfarland - ibid pp. 71-72.



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Against such an edict there was an immediate expression of disapproval by pastors and theologians, but none among them protested so vehemently as did Barth. Dr. Deiffenbach wrote in the 'Boston Transcript' for January 20, 1934, in his column, "Religion Today",

"It was Karl Barth, creator of a new theological attitude and unquestionably the most intellectual and potent spiritual figure on the continent of Europe, who last October came down from his professional chair in the great center of learning in Bonn, and told Hitler to his teeth that the Church would never tolerate a German Christain Church... Though Barth is a conservative Christian theologian, his sense of violations of a fundamental right was made alive."

He then quotes from Barth's article of which the Manchester Guardian said: it was

"one of the most splendid pieces of polemical writin in the German language; its impassioned prose is worthy of Luther!"

"What I have to say on the matter is simple - I say No, withour reservation or qualification to the letter and to the spirit of this doctrine. In my opinion the end of the Evangelical Church would have come if this doctrine were to achieve the exclusive preponderance the 'German Christians' wish it to achieve. I look upon those who h ve accepted this doctrine either as seducers or seduced. It is not the business of the church to serve mankind or the German people; it is the business of the church to serve the Word of God alone."

But the struggle between the church and the State has not lessened. And until the super-nationality of the Christian Church is again recognized in Germany one may be sure that the pen of Barth will not be idle in its defense. The Church of Jesus Christ can be subject to no political party, can be



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the pawn of no autocratic domination, without losing thereby its primary reason for existence, the spread of the Word of God.

Until very recently (a dispatch from Berlin dated January 13, 1934 announced his removal "because of his activities in opposition to the German Christian movement"<sup>1</sup>). Karl Barth was a theological professor in Germany, but he started his theological career as a pastor in a small town in Switzerland.

He was born in Basle, Switzerland, in 1886, the son of Fritz Barth who shortly afterwards became professor of New Testament in the University of Berne. Fritz Barth has won for himself considerable recognition as an authority in New Testament problems, and is the author of two books in his field: Die Hauptprobleme des Lebens Jesu, and Einleitung in das neue testament - Chief Problems in the Life of Jesus, and Introductions to the New Testament. It is plain that the early life of Karl Barth was spent in a home sympathetic to the study of theology. He <sup>begon</sup> ~~egan~~ his formal education in the schools in Berne; matriculated at the Gymnasium there, taking his degree in Theology, and then went to Germany where he attended Universities at Berlin, Tübingen, and Marburg. At the University of Berlin he sat under the great Harnack; at Marburg he was influenced by Johannes Weiss whose Interimsethik and eschatology colored Barth's later thought. But the teacher who most influenced Barth's thinking was Wilhelm Herrmann at

1. New York Times, January 14, 1934.

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Until very recently (a dispatch from Berlin dated January 13, 1934 announced his removal "because of his activities in opposition to the German Christian movement"). Karl Barth was a theological professor in Germany, but he started his theological career as a pastor in a small town in Switzerland.

He was born in Basle, Switzerland, in 1886, the son of Fritz Barth who shortly afterwards became professor of New Testament in the University of Bern. Fritz Barth was not for himself considerable recognition as an authority in New Testament problems, and is the author of two books in this field: Die Hauptprobleme des Neuen Testaments and Einleitung in das Neue Testament - Chief Problems in the Life of Jesus. and Introduction to the New Testament. It is clear that the early life of Karl Barth was spent in a home sympathetic to the study of theology. He began his formal education in the schools in Bern; matriculated at the Gymnasium there, taking his degree in theology, and then went to Germany where he attended Universities at Berlin, Tübingen, and Marburg, at the University of Berlin he sat under the great Harbach; at Marburg he was influenced by Johannes Weiss whose *Interpretation of the New Testament* colored Barth's later thought. But the teacher who most influenced Barth's thinking was Wilhelm Herrmann at



Marburg. Barth says that it was Herrmann who taught him to think independently in theology, and calls him his "unforgettable teacher." The effect of this great teacher upon Barth however, was hardly the usual effect of teacher upon pupil, for Barth has gone almost the opposite theological way pointed out by Herrmann! McConnachie tells us that,

"Herrmann had something to say to him that was fundamental, and following out its consequences, he has been compelled to say everything quite differently. But Herrmann it was who showed him the way." 1.

With Herrmann he rejects all mystical experiences of God, religious emotionalism, and pietism, and, as a student, he even accepted unquestioningly

"Herrmann's rejection of intellectualism, his repeated insistence that revelation was not doctrine, and faith not the acceptance of truth that everything depended on experience, and only on experience, that beyond that there was no authority." 2.

As a student Barth learned from Herrmann to think independently and critically, and he was not long delaying in using that critical independence of thought against his very teacher!

Between the two there remained till Hermann's death in 1922, a warm friendship despite the revolt in Barth's theological thinking.

After leaving Marburg, Barth returned to Switzerland in 1909 as assistant pastor in the German Reformed Church in Geneva. Here he remained until 1911 when he accepted a call to a full pastorate at Safenvil, a small rural parish in the Canton of Aargau. Here Barth encountered the spiritual

1. McConnachie, The Significance of Karl Barth. p.19.
2. Ibid, pp. 19-20.



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and mental problems which led to the development of his "theology."

Though academically well trained, and grounded in theoretical theology, he soon discovered through the practical problems of the pastorate, that he was not adequately prepared for this position. He was faced with the problems, as all young ministers are, of what to preach. He strove to find a message he could bring to his German Reformed Congregation that would bring to them the assuring Word of God. Barth was aware of the vacuum in our churches of which every pastor is aware: the vacuum of empty pews. But there is a greater vacuum than that, which accounts for the empty pews and that is the vacuum of empty hearts which have had nothing presented to them which satisfies their inarticulate hunger for the assuring Word of God. This vacuum Barth sought to fill.

The German Reformed Church was founded in Switzerland by Zwingli. He was a humanist, and believed that man needed no intermediary to reach God. He differed from Luther principally in his understanding of the Lord's Supper concerning the mystical or actual presence of the body of Christ.

John Calvin furthered the Swiss Reformation and was its greatest theologian. On <sup>him</sup> Barth rests most heavily for his theology.

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"Calvin's chief doctrine was of the absolute sovereignty of God, who is absolute causality, distinct from all that is finite yet determining the finite, the infinitely majestic and holy God ruling over man, whose nature is utterly corrupt through sin, so corrupt that man can do nothing for his salvation but throw himself upon God's grace. Man had no merit and so no order of Priest should come in, as in Romanism, to mediate salvation to men. God rules through his word; the 'ministry of the Word' was the chief service man could render God and his fellows, and so Calvin instituted the order of ministers, trained to understand and expound God's Word. Calvin thus expressed the all-regulating place of the Word when he wrote: 'We do not seek God anywhere else than in His Word, we do not think of Him save with His Word, we speak nothing of Him save through His Word'. It is on those dicta that Barth takes his stand with his central doctrine of the Word of God. As he says: 'The Reformed Churches saw that truth is contained only in the Word of God, that the Word of God for them lay only in the Old and New Testaments, and that every doctrine must be therefore measured against the unchangeable and impassable standard of the Scriptures!' 1.

As a young pastor in Safenvil he sought to work out for himself a theology consistent with the doctrine of the Reformed Church to which he belonged and yet a theology which would interpret the Word of God as that Word came to him. The years 1911-1918 were for Barth a period of "Sturm und Drang", years when in the face of developing social unrest he struggled to bring forth a "message" true to the Word of God. The culminated in the publication of his first book, Der Roemerbrief, during those years he studied three "worlds" intensely. The first was the World of the Bible. Believing as he did that the Word of God was to be found in

1. Hoyle, Teachings of Karl Barth, pp. 44-46.



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the Scriptures he set out to discover how it came to those who had written and compiled the Scriptures. He devoted himself to a deep study of the Bible. And here he became conscious for the first time of the great difference in the attitude of the men of the Bible and theologians he knew. Throughout the Bible there was the tensed attitude of people avidly looking up for a sign, for the Word, of rapt listeners, of utter humility. There came to him the consciousness of the infinite chasm between man and God, the total contrast of sinful man and Holy God; of the inexorable-ness with which the Word of God caught and held certain men; in short, of the utter foolishness of his contemporary theology which sought to discover and know God, which had made man incarnate! He saw the situation as a "crisis" of deep significance and it was his wish to provide a correction for the tendencies precipitating the tragic end of the crisis. He sought

"to call attention to the critical situation which has arisen in Protestantism because its preachers have ceased to preach the Word of God, and its theologians to build their theology upon the Word of God. Rather they are reaching from the depth or rather the shallows of their own religious experience, as though they themselves were God, or containing God, Rather they are building as theologians upon the shifting sands of religious feelings and emotions; and making mystical experiences which are the projections of their own inner moods the foundations of their thoughts upon God, who lives beyond all moods and all experiences. Or those who have no confidence in their own moods and inner experience would find God within the stream of history. They seek to reconstruct the Jesus of history, and to find God through showing His God-consciousness, or following His Precepts. They reject



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the religion about Jesus and hold fast to the cross, but robs them of the hope of resurrection."

It was in his study of Paul that he found his first peace of mind. He was fascinated by the revelation of the power of the Holy Spirit when it once touched a man; at the completeness with which it overwhelms and keeps its chosen ones loyal. He conceived of Paul as one upon whom God had laid His hand. Barth writes:

"The man Paul evidently sees and hears something which is above everything, which is absolutely beyond the range of my observation and measure of my thought." 2.

Following this observation Barth too became a "listener" - and in that moment was born the "Theology of Crisis."

"It is to this experience that we are to trace the reverence, the humility, the respect before God, so perceptible in Barth. The Bible, he reminds us, has a single word for this attitude; it is the word 'Witness'. Witness is ever the finger that points beyond itself to the one for whom it witnesses. Barth became now and has remained first and foremost, a witness, a pointing finger to God, and to His Revelation." 3.

The second "world" to which Barth turned his powers of study was that of the world of his day. Out of the study of the Bible that he was making Barth derived a sense of perspective that he carried into the second field of observation. He sought to "read" the world of his own day as the men of the Bible had theirs. He read the Writings of modern radicals like Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Overbeck, and others, and was himself for a time radical and critical.

1. *Wend, "Karl Barth, Prophet and Theologian" p. 7*

2. *McConnachie, Significance of Karl Barth, p. 24.*

3. *Ibid, p. 25.*



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1. *Barth's Theology of Crisis*, p. 24.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.



"He found in the pictures which they sketched in the criticisms which they uttered, the same view point which the men of the Bible had; the viewpoint from which all that is human must be judged. As these writers deeply colored the mind of Barth during those formation years we must look at their influence in some detail. He admired, he tell us, 'The dialectic courage of Kierkegaard, the Hunger for Eternity of Dostoyevsky, the reverence of Overbeck, the hope of Blumhardt.'" 1.

The full impact of these men upon the plastic mind of Barth at this time cannot there be recounted. But for a proper appreciation of what is to follow some account must be made of each of these men.

Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian.

Born in 1813, the son of a small landowner of strong Moravian faith, Kierkegaard was destined by his elderly father to enter the ministry. The son developed a melancholy nature acquired from close association with his deeply religious father, and all his life lived close to himself, becoming more and more a recluse in the later years of his life. He died in 1855, unrecognized and unknown.

His influence upon the thought world has been far greater than is generally known. Besides affecting Barth deeply, the philosophy of Kierkegaard has found voice in the works of Ibsen, Unomuno, and Heidegger, and its sphere of influence seems to be growing in ever widening circles.

The principle contribution of Kierkegaard to Barth is the dualism of time and eternity which Kierkegaard phrases:

1. McConnachie, Ibid. p. 26.



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"The infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity."

Taken in both its positive and negative senses it sums up compactly the philosophy of Kierkegaard and as well, the theology of Barth. It was Kierkegaard who developed the dialectic adopted by Barth which gave to the Barthian Theology the title of "Dialectical Theology". To this dialectic which he constructed Kierkegaard

"attached high value as a means of bringing out absolute distinctions, where such existed between things which men slurred over in their efforts at superficial reconciliation, such as God and the world. This dialectic found expression in the title of his book, Either e Or."

Kierkegaard conceived that contemporary Christianity had prostituted itself for popular favor. It had dulled the sharpness of the Gospel message, had become an easy, superficial thing. It had forgotten

"the endless qualitative distinction between man and God." 2.

Man is a paradox of time and eternity; the Incarnation is a paradox of the human and the divine; faith itself is a paradox of incomprehensibility and impassioned trust. With a theology based upon such paradoxes Kierkegaard sought to reawaken his age to the true message of Christianity and the inexorableness of its demand expressed in Either - Or. The use which Barth has made of Kierkegaard will become apparent in the following pages.

Although the Russian novelist Dostoyevsky was

1. McConachie, *ibid.* p. 28.

2. *Ibid.* p. 29.



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Although the Russian novelist Dostoyevsky was



not acquainted with the work of Kierkegaard, his writing reflects much that reminds one of the Dane. In the novels of Dostoyevsky there is found the same distrust of the church and of organised Christianity as is expressed by Kierkegaard.

"The church has taken the burden from man which he sought to bear, and given his sermons, and promises and 'children's happiness' at the price of freedom. It leads him no more into the depths where he can only cry out for God. But while Dostoyevsky saw the end of man, the end of all his ways, he saw the "awful rose of Dawn." Not downfall, not the laughter of the devil, but the incomprehensible, victorious word 'Resurrection' is the last word of his romances... In death there is new birth. This deep knowledge is found 'in the moment of death.'" 1.

Dostoyevsky

"knows that for man there is no bridge to God, but from God to man - perhaps? The central thought of Dostoyevsky is God. The question of God is the question of all his works. There is no step that leads from man to God. For God would not be God if man could become God. But there rises the hope that the solution will come out of God's hand. God will triumph." 2.

The influence of Dostoyevsky upon Barth will become apparent as we discuss the latter's doctrine of man and God.

The contribution which Overbeck made to the development of Barth's thinking was primarily his reverence for truth and his violent dislike for illusion. From him Barth first discovered the need for a different basis for faith than history, and derived the idea which led to his theory of what he calls "Urgeschichte". This theory of super-historical events will be discussed relative to Revelation.

1. McConnachie, Significance of Karl Barth, pp 34-35.
2. McConnachie, Ibid, p. 36.



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According to Overbeck Christianity is not history - it is superhistorical, Urgeschichte.

The eschatology of Blumhardt, its emphasis upon the awakening of soul~~s~~, its message of hope, and the second Advent, also influenced Barth at this time. The eschatology of Barth derives much from Blumhardt.

"The third world into which Barth entered in these decisive years, and in which he has dwelt ever/since, was the world of the Reformers. He made a deep study of the works of Luther, and learned also what he calls 'the inexorableness' of Calvin" 1.

From Calvin he derived the phrase "finitum non est capax infiniti" - the finite has no capacity for the infinite, which recurs prominently in his theology. The fuller significance of this study of the Reformers will be noted later.

At the same time that he was making these studies just noted, Barth also associated himself with the Christian Socialist Party in the hope that through the efforts of such an organization a social order approaching the ideal of the Kingdom of God could be hastened. Like most of our young pastors who have absorbed Rauschenbusch and Ward, he was fired with the challenge of Socialism. The leaders of the group of religious socialists with whom Barth allied himself were Kutter, and Ragaz, friends and followers of Walter Rauschenbusch. Under the influence of these leaders Barth became an ardent socialist. The Kingdom of God was conceived to be a social order embodying the ethical teachings of Jesus, and it seemed to this group that in not stressing and using its

1. McConnachie, Ibid, p. 40.



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influence to establish this society the church had not remained true to its Gospel message.

During the World War he saw the Christian Socialists supporting the government in their policy of war, voting war credits to the Reich, and he saw the churches (even as they did in this country) rally to the needs of the nation by spreading war propaganda and soliciting subscriptions and enlistments to carry on the war, as though it were an holy enterprise. This Barth conceived to be so utterly unChristian that he could no longer maintain his relations with the Christian Socialists, or continue his support of the government. Barth and Thurneysen retired to their studies to solve for themselves the whole problem of the relation of the Kingdom to the world, and to wrestle with the problem of what and how to preach in the face of such a situation.

"They came to the conclusion that the kingdom

as such, had nothing to do with socialism, capitalism, syndicalism, or any other programs for social betterment. Above all it could not be identified with bath-tubs, railroads, or any other physical improvements. And there could be no such thing as Christian Socialism, Christian Capitalism, Christian laws, and the like. The kingdom, according to the New Testament, is here and yet is not here; it comes on earth and yet is not of the earth. There is ultimately a qualitative difference between the highest unaided human ethical endeavor and the kingdom. Barth came to the conclusion that the eschatological element in Jesus' idea of the kingdom cannot be waived aside with a brush of the liberal hand. It is not only basic to Jesus' idea of the Kingdom, but its dualistic nature is true to the Christian experience. The kingdom is God's, and as such it remains God's. It becomes a living force in the world, but is never to be identified



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with any particular scheme of the world. The kingdom can never be only a kingdom on earth; if it did it would cease to be the kingdom of God. Grasp it in a particular scheme and it disappears. " 1.

Following this revolt against Socialism and the identification of Christianity with any particular social movement Barth began seriously to work out his own theology. Starting originally as simple marginal corrective notes, his theology has gathered about itself a "School" of writers and preachers and theologians who are spreading the message of Barth around the World.

His theology has taken in its development, three major steps according to Dean Knudson, the first of these being

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The second stage in his theological development began with the publication of the second edition of his Römerbrief, in 1922. In the years since the appearance of the first edition Barth had radically altered his views so that the second edition was almost entirely different from the first.

1. Homrighausen, "Barthianism and the Kingdom" p. 922.
2. Knudson, "German Fundamentalism." Christian Century. Vol. 45. p. 763.



with any particular scheme of the world. The Kingdom can never be only a Kingdom on earth; if it did it would cease to be the Kingdom of God. Thus it is a particular scheme and it disappears. 1.

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The principle reason for this change was the new conception which he had of the relation of the human and the divine to each other.

"In 1918 he not only believed in the possibility

of the emergence of the eternal in the order of time, but positively affirmed its actuality as something effected in and through Jesus Christ. But in 1922 this view was set aside. Barth not only rejected the naturalistic evolutionism of modern thought, he also repudiated the modern theological idea of the divine immanence, and directed his main attack against it. He now maintained with Kierkegaard, the Danish rebel against official Christianity, that there is an endless qualitative difference between time and eternity, so that the eternal or the divine cannot possibly appear in the temporal or mundane sphere. The world is the antithesis of the divine, it is 'sick unto death', and so stands under the judgment of God. The crisis which it confronts is, therefore, no temporal accident, it is inherent in the very nature of the world. It is not future, but present, It is not eschatological, but dialectical." 1.

The last stage in the development of Barth's theology was introduced by the appearance of the first volume of his projected six-volume Christian Dogmatics. This stage does not represent so much a change from the earlier, but rather a special emphasis upon certain features of the other stage.

"The earlier 'crisis' and the dialectic motives are retained, but they recede into the background. Attention is now centered on the idea of revelation. Indeed the whole volume just referred to deals with 'the doctrine of the Word Of God', The Word is made the one ultimate source of theology... Theology rests, therefore, entirely upon revelation. This has been Barth's position from the beginning, but of late (1928) he has so concentrated attention upon it that his theology might now with certain fitness be called 'the theology of the Word,' as well as the 'crisis' or 'dialectic' theology." 2.

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The fundamental principles of theology which Barth has worked out are not many, nor are they startling in themselves. But because Barth relentlessly insists upon drawing from them all the deductions possible they assume a significance far greater than they appear to warrant. The first of these principles is that which he derived from Kierkegaard, "the infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity." Coupled with this is the contention of Calvin that the finite has no capacity for the infinite; ("initium non est capax infiniti"); and the final principle is that all things are from God. As Barth develops them it is seen that we live in a sphere apart from God, and are, consequently, all sinners needing to be restored to the Divine favor. Of ourselves, however, there is no way to affect that restoration. All such initiative must come from God. The temporal, finite realm in which we live excludes the possibility of our ever knowing God. But He does know us, and does make His will, though never Himself, known unto us, by His special acts of revelation. In them does He break through into time. They are Urgeschichte. They are the "Word of God." In a sentence the theology of Karl Barth is a plea for the return to the Word of God as the norm of religion, in fact as the only legitimate norm for what is deservedly called religious.

The plea of Barth is not, however, a plea for a return to Fundamentalism; that Barth rejects as mercilessly as he rejects Modernism. Barth is in entire sympathy with



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The plea of Barth is not, however, a plea for a return to Fundamentalism; that Barth rejects as meticulously as he rejects Modernism. Barth is in entire sympathy with



the critics of the Bible and the discoveries of researchers who have pointed out the inconsistencies and the contradictions of the Bible. Nevertheless, the Fundamentalistic emphasis upon the validity of the Word of God is the corner stone of the Barthian theology. Barth differs from Fundamentalists in his rejection of the infallibility of Scripture; the trend of modern science and the theory of evolution find no objections in Barth, and his attitude toward such Fundamentalistic beliefs as the Virgin Birth, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and of miracles in general are more or less ambiguous. The Fundamentalist's dogmatic finality is rejected as being inconsistent with the dialectic of human thought.

This, however, does not by any means indicate that Barth is a "modernist". Here too he finds much to reject and discourage.

"The modern man thinks that he can save himself. He has no sense of sin, and no consciousness of a divine authority on which he may lean for guidance and for redemption. He is sufficient unto himself. He is himself divine. God is immanent in him and in the world. It is this attitude of Barth, that constitutes at once the essence and the basal error of modernism. Against it, consequently, he and his associates have directed the entire energy of their being. They have insisted upon the absolute necessity and infallible authority of revelation in the field of religion. To a self-sufficient evolutionism they have opposed the idea of an eschatological crisis. As over against the doctrine of the divine immanence they have affirmed an endless qualitative difference between time and eternity. Not only have they condemned the godless pretensions of the modern man. His very quest after God they have placed under the ban. Religion as commonly understood they



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regard as an impious pretension. It is an attempt on man's part to reach God through his own unaided efforts, and as such is doomed to failure. There is no human way to God. The only road connecting the human and the divine is one from God to Man." 1.

While Barth derives from both Fundamentalism and Modernism elements of worth which he has incorporated into his present system, he is neither one nor the other. Nevertheless, Barthian theology is a kind of "Fundamentalism" because of its opposition to Modernism.

"Barth and his friends are as seriously concerned over the present trend in protestant theology as the American Fundamentalists. They see in it a great defection from the faith, and are thoroughly convinced that the only hope of Protestantism lies in a revival of its reformation type. But they attack the problem created by modern thought in a profounder way. They find the basal sin of modernism not in ~~its~~ rejection of the doctrine of biblical authority and infallibility, but in its belief in the self-sufficiency of man as this is expressed in the doctrine of evolution and that of the divine immanence." 2.

Barth represents a combination of Fundamentalistic authoritarianism and Modernistic criticism. In the revelations of the Word of God, Barth finds the infallibility upon which he bases his authoritarianism, and in the finitude of man as opposed to the infinity of God he finds the cause for his criticism of all the works of man, even to the inclusion of the Bible as a "work of Man."

The Church as the representative of Christianity, and the instrument through which the Word of God was to reach all people has failed in its mission. During the War Barth had brought home strongly to him the alliance of the Church

1. Knudson, op.cit. pp. 763-764.

2. Knudson, loc.cit. pp. 762-763.



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"Barth declares that the Church has only one *raison d'être*, namely to proclaim the Word of God in Jesus Christ. The only message which he deems to be the valid message of the Church is the Gospel of the Bible. Theology, as he understands it, is therefore, the endeavor to measure the preaching of the Church at the one adequate criterion; the Word of God as given in the Bible. It is a fact, he says, that the Church is confronted by the Bible, and this fact and nothing else is the only reason and the only excuse for preaching and for theological labor." 1.

This is the answer which the young pastor evolved when he retired to his study to discover what he could preach. The only thing for any preacher to preach is the Word of God. To make of our pulpits a combination vaudeville show and chautauqua platform is to sell out our heritage and birth-right for a mess of pottage which has no eternal value. But to make of our pulpits a sounding board for the Word of God is to make them amplifiers of the one eternally significant fact that exists in time. The call of Barth then is a call to return to the Word of God as the sole theme of our sermons and our pulpit messages. No longer are we to turn to current events and simply lecture on events of the times, no longer are we to search for startling and novel themes which have no relation to the Gospel messages, no

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longer are we to make of our pulpits and churches loud speakers for any so-called "social-gospel." We are to return to the Word of God as it is revealed from eternity to finite man, and in it discover anew the only true Christian message.

This is the secret of the appeal of the Barthian theology to the world of to-day. Out of a world torn by the ravages of war, economic upheaval, and social revolution there comes to the hearts of a people who are weary of the world, hearts which are hungry for some assurance that despite the seeming dystheological aspects of the present world of experience there is above it all a God who exists and who cares, even though he be ever so remote, and who offers them a Promise and a Hope, Barth's message with its emphasis upon that assurance. ~~That the~~

That the peoples of the Continent have been filling the churches to hear this new message, and that it has received the studied attention of serious theological students the world over, is in itself no proof of its validity. But that such a movement can win such universal acclaim, and that it can meet the needs of so many hungry hearts is proof enough of the fact that this is one of those movements in our times to which some future peoples may look back and exclaim:

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conception of the dualism of the present, temporal, spatial  
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new doctrine. On the contrary, Arnobius, writing in the third century stated:

"If you do not refuse to hear what we think, we are so far from attributing to God bodily lineaments that we fear to ascribe to so great an object even the graces of the mind, and the very virtues in which to excel is hardly granted to a few. For who can speak of God as brave, as constant, as moderate, as wise. Nay, who can say that He knows anything, that He understands, that He acts with foresight, that He directs the determination of His actions toward definite ends of duty. These are human goods, and as opposed to vices deserve a laudable reputation. But who is there so dull of heart, and so stupid, as to call God great in human goods, or to speak of the surpassing excellence of His name as if it consisted in a freedom from the stain of vices. What ever you can conceive in silent thought, passes into a human sense, and is corrupted thereby. Nothing can properly signify and denote Him which is expressed in terms of human speech for human uses. There is but one way in which man can understand with certainty concerning the nature of God, and that is to know and feel that nothing can be expressed concerning Him in mortal speech." 1.

This passage from Arnobius is in tone so "Barthian" that it might well have come from some of the works of Barth or one of his colleagues. That this ineffableness of God is the chief certainty of the Barthians is seen in the emphasis which they place upon God as being the "totally Other" the utterly transcendent God existing in an eternity which is qualitatively different from time; the absentee God to whom there is no path which Man may travel. God is unknowable, unexperienced, and unspeakable in human terminology. The terms with which we are accustomed to speak about God are for Barth anathema, and it is against their very assumptions that Barth

1. Quoted in Brown, Pathways to Certainty, pp. 134-135.



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from that of the well known passage of the works of Basil on one of his qualities. That this intellectuality of God is the chief certainty of the Christians is seen in the emphasis which they place upon "God as being the 'totally Other' the utterly transcendent 'God existing in an eternity which is qualitatively different from time; the absolute God to whom there is no such thing as time. God is unknowable, unexperienced, and ungraspable in human terminology. The terms with which we are accustomed to speak about God are for Basil empty, and it is against their very assumptions that Basil

1. Quoted in Brown, Pathways to German Mysticism, pp. 154-155.



most strenuously and vehemently cries: "I say NO!"

But in order to understand the position which Barth holds concerning God, one must first understand his meaning of the "infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity." On this difference /is the whole Barthian theology constructed and if one accepts this dualism of time and eternity one becomes essentially a Barthian.

In Henri Bergson's Time and Free Will our attention is drawn to the peculiar problems involved in the current conception of time, and its close relation to space. Added to this suggestive beginning in the reopening of the problem of the nature of time, were the contributions of Einstein's theory of the relativity of time, and Minkowski's theory of space-time. The opening thus made into the problem has again set philosophers to the problem of attempting to find the answer to the riddle which agitated even Saint Augustine: just what is time? The Confessions of Augustine reveal to us his long struggle with the problem and his conclusion that time was simply extension, but an extension of what even he could not say. "I

"I perceive time to be a sort of extension... but an extension of what I know not, and I wonder if it may not be of the mind itself."<sup>1</sup>.

It is this that Barth, also wrestles with, the problem of time, and it is on the answer to that question that, he has founded his whole theology.

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1. Quoted in Lowrie, Theology of Crisis, p. 63.

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From Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher of the



last century, Barth derived the principle which answers the problem of time for him:

"there is an endless qualitative difference between time and eternity."

And in the light of this principle Barth interprets his whole theology. Bearing in mind always the essential difference between time and eternity, the seemingly unintelligible theses of this new movement become intelligible, and to grant this qualitative difference is to accept for the most part the conclusion of Barth.

What does this "infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity" mean? It means that our conception of eternity as being time extended endlessly is a false conclusion. Our common assertion that eternity extends as far ahead of us as it does behind us (implying the endless extension referred to above) is incorrect. Time extended backward leads us only to the end of time, beyond which exists an entirely different realm, that of the eternity of before time was (the Arche); likewise, time projected forward leads us only to the end of time, to the eternity of after time ceases to exist (the Telos). Thus, to use a figure which shall later have to be dropped, time may be conceived of as simply a bridge between the Arche and the Telos. The "bridge" is of one nature (the temporal realm contains all material as opposed to "spiritual"), being, and is characterized according to Barth, by "low life, false pleasure, false love (eros and

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problem of time for him:

"There is an endless qualitative difference  
between time and eternity."

And in the light of this principle Barth interprets his whole

theology. Bearing in mind always the essential difference

between time and eternity, the seemingly unbridgeable chasm

of this new movement becomes intelligible, and to grant this

qualitative difference is to accept for the most part the

conclusion of Barth.

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livos), sexuality as foul and rotten as ever cursed Corinth (corinthia, a prostitute) of Babylon. Such conditions imply transitoriness, the absence of true art, culture, morality, religion." 1.

The Eternity from which this is qualitatively different is of an antithetical nature:

"in contrast with the present world, in endless qualitative difference, in fundamental antithetical relation is the NEW WORLD, the new world of the living God. That is the real world, the only world of true life. It is radically different from the present world: is absolute, not relative; real not contingent; the wholly OTHER, the immaterial, spiritual, eternal world, not subject to dissolution." 2.

This figure of the "bridge" is especially apt in another sense than as the span between the two ends of time, for time to Barth is unmoving. It is we who move through time, we are travellers across a static bridge. When Isaac Watts says,

"Time, like an ever-rolling stream  
Bears all its sons away..."

he is expressing exactly the opposite view of time from that held by Barth, "time does not move, it is we who are the "ever rolling stream." We are travellers from the Arche to Telos, across the bridge of time separating them.

John McConnachie points out a striking similarity in the line of thought followed by Barth with that of James Jeans as expressed in The Mysterious Universe.

"It is not time that passes, but we who pass through time. Events do not happen, we merely come across them as they await us in the way. Barth and Jeans have plainly been in

1. Zerbe, The Karl Barth Theology, p. 46.
2. Zerbe. Op. cit. p 47.

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the same school of Plato. Further, when Jeans quoting a writer, suggests that 'the element of surprise is sufficient warrant for external reality', he is moving unconsciously into the the eschatological world of Barth." 1.

The Beginning (ARCHE) is before time exists, and the End (TELOS) is after time was. Between this Arche and Telos, time as we know it exists. It is thus evident that since there is a beginning and an end to time it is thus finite, itself temporal; having a beginning and an end. Because it is finite it can never know within itself as a part of time anything of the nature of the infinite. Consequently nowhere in time is God to be found or evidences of Him to be discovered. Man has his existence in this finite time and is himself finite and approaching the end of existence with the end of time. To return to our figure of the "bridge", Man is but a traveller over the bridge of time from the eternity of Before existence to the eternity of After existence. Man is thus a finite being, ever faced with the crisis of an impending ending to his existence. As a finite being he can never have within himself (through any knowledge or "religious experience") that which is of the nature of the eternal, consequently he can never know God. This bridge upon which man is but a traveller from Eternity to Eternity never leads him to it so that he is able to apprehend it, it simply represents man's existence in the temporal realm which we know. But as a traveller in finite time, man is ever faced with the possibility of an end to the "bridge", when he will

1. The Mysterious Universe, p. 139.

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be reborn into eternity. Since the quality of man's life is limited by his existence within ~~the~~ finite time, it is qualitatively different from the existence which he has in the eternity before Birth and the eternity after Death. Even as man can know nothing of that previous life, so can he know nothing of that future life. They represent the eternal life of Eternity - the Spiritual - and consequently can never be contained within the consciousness of ~~the~~ finite mind. Finitum non est capax infiniti: the finite has no capacity for the infinite.

But since God is the Creator of time, He may as he chooses enter upon the "bridge", through the media of special revelations. Barth conceives here an ontological dualism (based on his dualism of time and eternity) between the reality of God, the Creator, and the creation of God, and posits the world as having an objectivity or otherness distinct from its Creator. Barth's world-view is realistic, which he conceives <sup>as</sup> having a "quasi-independent existence" (Knudson). Consequently the relation of God to the world is that of a Creator who is apart from his creation in any sense. From this belief Barth goes on to maintain that it follows *that works in* nature (the World) does man find evidence of either the existence or the nature (character) of God. He is an absentee God - but the world is his, nevertheless, and from His transcendent position in Eternity He may intervene in the world through special revelations which are of the nature of miracles

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From this discussion of the fundamental theses of the Barthian theology it is seen that: there is an infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity which makes it impossible for the finite ever either to apprehend or comprehend the infinite, and that this qualitative difference places God in an <sup>un</sup>approachable position as a transcendent Being ontologically distinct from His creation, <sup>but nevertheless able</sup> in <sup>the</sup> order of that creation as He chooses.

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From this discussion of the fundamental thesis of the Barthelemy theory it is seen that there is an infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity which makes it impossible for the finite ever either to apprehend or comprehend the infinite, and that this qualitative difference places God in an <sup>incomprehensible</sup> position as a transcendent Being ontologically distinct from his creation in order of that creation as he chooses.

*Barthelemy's position*



The whole conception of the relation of God to the world and to man held by Barth is contained in a single sentence:

"God is in heaven, man on earth." 1.

And as we noted in the last section of this paper, the nature of God is an unknown to man because of his transcendence. Because God has his being in heaven, eternity, and man has his on earth (time), therefore, from the Calvinistic corollary, that man can never know God. This Barth affirms. He says that we need to be reminded, because of our "Victorian insolence" in attempting to grasp for ourselves what does not belong to us, that

"There is no way from us to God, not even a via negativa, not even a via dialectica nor paradoxica. The God who stands at the end of some human way, even if this way, would not be God." 2.

Furthermore, Barth, man's tendency to mistake God in religious experience, as man's "hybris", and as such is the source of sin, the vanity of religion, and man's first order of sin. In this attack on religion Barth goes beyond Hittachi and denies the principle upon which all religious rests.

"What they [the theologians who represent the 'Theology of Crisis'] primarily object to in mysticism is not the extreme doctrine of divine transcendence, nor the indifference to history, but its doctrine of the divine immanence, its suggestion that God is within."

1. Barth, Church Dogmatics, vol. 1, pp. 2, 3.  
2. Barth, Word of God and Word of Man, p. 74.

THE  
CONCEPTION OF GOD  
AND  
REVELATION



The whole conception of the relation of God to the world and to man held by Barth is contained in a single sentence:

"God is in heaven, man on earth." 1.

And as we noted in the last section of this paper, the nature of God is an unknowable quantity due to his transcendence. Because God has His being in heaven, (eternity), and man has his on earth (time), it follows, from the Calvinistic corollary, that man can never know God. This Barth affirms. He says that we need to be reminded, because of our "Fichtean insolence" in attempting to grasp for ourselves what does not belong to us, that

"There is no way from us to God, not even a via negative, not even a via dialectica nor paradoxa. The God who stood at the end of some human way, even off this way, would not be God." 2.

Furthermore, Pietism, man's endeavor to snuggle close to God in religious experience, he terms man's "hybris", and as such is the conceit of conceits, the vanity of vanities, and man's first order of sin. In this attack on Pietism Barth goes beyond Ritschl and denies the principle upon which all mysticism rests.

"What they [the theologians who represent the "Theology of Crisis"] primarily object to in mysticism is not its extreme doctrine of divine transcendence, nor its indifference to history, but its doctrine of the divine immanence, its conviction that God manifests

1. Barth, Römerbrief, quoted by Zerbe, *ibid*, p. 49.
2. Barth, Word of God and Word of Man, p.177.

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himself in human experience, and that through feeling or some other form of psychical activity man is able to lay hold of the "divine.... Neither in the human will nor the human reason ~~or~~ human feeling can God be found. He is the antithesis of every human. The whole adventure of mysticism is, therefore, a mistake, yes, more than a mistake, an 'impious presumption.'"1.

Any attempt on the part of man to discover God is doomed to failure for the finite has no capacity for the infinite", and Barth insists that means no capacity whatsoever. This is a logical conclusion to the major premise of the Barthian theology, which expresses the infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity. Upon this dichotomy of time and eternity does the theology of Karl Barth rest and from this dualism is his transcendent, Totally Other God a necessary conclusion.

God has His being in Eternity and as such is never to be discovered in any manner in the temporal realm within His power, and while Man may never know God, God may, and does, know and direct Man. He remains aloof from His creation, and by his very aloofness frustrates every attempt on the part of man to discover His nature. The apparent order in the universe, the seeming purposiveness of that order and the intelligence which it implies as lying behind the universe - may be said to be of God; - it is a consequence of His Creatorship, but never may it be said that it is God. We must ever bear in mind that He is Other than that, and though such evidence may point to Him it never re-

1. Knudson. Doctrine of God, p. 95.



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"However noble our notions of God may be, and however useful or necessary, we must say to ourselves, This is not He; we must check ourselves constantly by the reminder, 'How much more!'" 1.

"God stands in contrast to man as the impossible, as death in contrast to life, as eternity in contrast to time, The solution of the riddle, the answer to the question, the satisfaction of our need is the absolutely new event whereby the impossible becomes itself possible, death becomes life, eternity time, and God man. There is no way which leads to this event; there is no faculty in man for apprehending it; for the way and the faculty are themselves new; being the revelation and faith, the knowing and being known enjoyed by the new man." 2.

Man is not to seek in nature any "revelation" of the being of God. Even against the theory of the Immanence of God (to say nothing of Pantheism) does Barth hurl his polemic. God is not immanent in nature, not in Man; - God is "wholly Other", and can never be read out of either nature or man.. According to Barth the very opposite is true; nature hides God rather than reveals him, We must reinstate the distance between God and man, and refrain from the insolence of attempting to bring Him within our finite knowledge.

1. Lowrie, Theology of Crisis. p 112.
2. Barth. Word of God, and Word of Man. p 197.



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This "distance", however, is not to be thought of as a spatial distance, but only the imperceptible fine line, the "hair-line", between time and eternity. Not is God to be discovered through ~~thought~~ and so-called experience of him. The Mystic's cry of "Rejoice with me for I am God," implying that he has achieved oneness with God through a mystical "religious experience" is for Barth the acme of heresy and the extreme of insolence.

"Man as man cannot know God. In vain is all his wishing, striving, seeking, reflection, zeal. The decisive point is missed, must be missed." 1.

Barth's whole conception here is summed up in the dictum:

Finitum non est capax infiniti: the finite has no capacity for the infinite. There is no way from man to God - neither Nature nor Man includes him, neither religion nor philosophy discovers him. Not only can we not find him, we cannot ever understand him.

"Not even a proof of his existence is possible to us. Barth sweeps away with scorn the whole apparatus of apologetic for theism. Brunner says trenchantly that 'next to the foolishness of denying God, certainly the greatest is that of proving him'!" 2.

The same breath, however, that affirms so strenuously that there is "no way from man to God" also affirms that there is a way "from God to man." And in the realization of that fact we ought to find comfort and encouragement. It clears away much of what Barth believes to be idolatry and false faith in order that the Word of God may be known to us, that God may reveal himself to us.

1. Barth, quoted by Zerbe, The Karl Barth Theology, p. 77.
2. Lowrie, Op.Cit. p. 123.



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How then is God known? He isn't. God can never be known by man. Man can never discover God in any act in any thought, in any experience. God is utterly transcendent, ineffable, Totally Other. The "time-bridge" (and here my figure reveals its weakness) is the construct of God and not man, and though God allows man to exist on that bridge He has withdrawn Himself so completely that man can never find Him anywhere along the way. The "bridge" is no bridge from man to God, and no matter how long man might travel over that bridge he would never discover God. But God, also may travel that bridge if He chooses, and this He does by means of the revelations and interventions which He has made. This capacity which God has for entering at will upon the time-bridge increases his awesomeness and ought rightfully, according to Barth, to make us fear the possibility of His wrath upon us. Because of the uncertainty which faces man, of the length of the time-bridge for him, he is ever faced with the imperative of immediately answering unequivocally once and for all to the crisis of his existence. He is ever faced with the inescapable fact of his finitude and urgency of answering "yea" or "nay" to the Word of God. He is ever faced with death, and consequently ought to live conditioned by the inescapable fact of that certain end. And his "yea" or "nay" to the Word of God is an answer which he cannot escape making. To answer "yea" to the Word of God means to throw one's whole being into the Word of God in Action, to live here and now as



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though the Kingdom of God were here and now. It does not mean to ally oneself with any special "ism" or school of reform; it has nothing to do with any idealistic "system" of social control or reconstruction. It has simply to do with the Word of God, and the expression<sup>of</sup> that Word in actions consistent with it. The Kingdom of God is never completely achieved on earth.

"... only when the last day comes, the last one day of the world, when all will have learned to love one another, when none will live for themselves, but all for one another, shall we see him (God) face to face. At the end of the world, all will be brought under his rule. And only then shall we know fully what perfection is, who God is. Only then shall we enter the Kingdom of God. Until then it is our duty, day by day, to make room for him, and in every single act to live in the service of one another, preparing the way of the Lord, building the Kingdom of God on earth, - as far as that may be done. To this end, in the name of the liberty which we, as the faithful, have tasted at those moments when we ceased to think of our macrocosmic or microcosmic selves as divine, God the Totally Other, the supreme ruler over all life, we are to devote ourselves to every cause of freedom." 1.

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and unquavering stand which he does. The Word of God is being made manifest in the action of these men in full accord with the Barthian theology. Despite its emphasis upon the transitoriness of life which leads many people to believe that to be consistent, Barth could not ally himself with any such movement as that <sup>in</sup> which he is at present engaged. It is in this principle, that we must ally ourselves with every cause for Freedom, that one finds the Barthian interest in this world as well as the next. Ours is the obligation to *listen to* the Word of God - and to translate these words into our every day life of action.

It is by translating the Word of God into our life of action that we realize the Kingdom of God. As we have noted, the Kingdom has no relation to any political or social theory, nor is it allied with any "movement" of the nature of Communism or Socialism or Fascism. Rather, the Kingdom of God

"is as a task and not as an object of desire, as a goal and not as a termination of moral struggle. " 1.

With Omar we might wish

"to grasp this sorry Scheme of Things Entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits - and then  
Re-mold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!" --

but we would be conscious of the fact that it can never be so shattered and remolded. This realm can never become the Kingdom of God. It can only be "becoming"; the Kingdom of God is

1. Barth *ibid.* p. 160.

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of God, not man; hence is non-temporal, infinite, and qualitatively different from anything we can know here in time.

Since God is eternal, and has his being within the eternal, he is transcendent to time. He is above it and beyond it. But as the Creator of it he may as he chooses intervene in time. The bridge from eternity is only one way in the sense that man can never reach or see into Eternity (thus to gain knowledge of what is on the "Yon-side"), but God, may, from his position in eternity, enter upon the bridge.

The very finitude of all that exists within the temporal realm constitutes the crisis which confronts the "world and all that dwell therein." But beyond, behind this crisis there is the eternal, and the Crisis points to the eternal. That which is points to an absolute origin of all that is, was, or can be within the temporal realm. Every attempt to understand what is must seek beyond it, must look to the Creator, must understand the relationship between what is and its origin. Because the absolute Origin is God, and resides outside the temporal order, one can never acquire knowledge concerning ultimate reality.

"The word 'origin', the infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity, may mean that God is the ultimate reality, but that it is impossible to say what this reality is. God is never a reality of life. If he were that he would not be God. but an idol: and as such he should be doubted and questioned, together with all things of this life and the world." 1.



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Only God is the Absolute, and as such he is Totally Other than everything else which

"stands in transcendental relation to him." 1. By this Totality Otherness Barth, and the 'theologians of crisis' do not refer to any metaphysical dualism as it appears in such a statement.

"God is not a transcendent X outside of this world, existent in supreme isolation... In the words of Brunner: when the 'theologians of crisis' speak of the transcendent God, they are 'treating of an epistemological but not a cosmological transcendence.' They revive the old slogan of the Reformed Church, *Finitum non capax infiniti*, which means that, from the viewpoint of man, God is always the unknown, the remote." 2.

In this sense of remoteness it is that Barth insists we must reassert the "distance between God and Man" noted in the last section of this paper. God is Beyond Apprehension, Beyond Comprehension, Because of the fact that the finite can never contain the infinite, human thoughts can never contain the Divine. God is ever the Subject, never the predicate. God can be the subject of no experience of Man, nor can He be discovered as the End of any search by Man. Only an unquestioning, uncriticising, uncompromising Acceptance gives man any knowledge whatever concerning God, and that knowledge man has only because God gives it to him through Revelation.

But if, as we have seen, God is not to be found or to be understood by any search or experience of ours,

1. Ibid. P 108.  
2. Ibid. pp. 108-109 .

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how then, is he to "reveal" Himself to us? Here we come to the most important element in the theology of Karl Barth - his belief concerning revelation. Pauck considers this to be so significant to Barth's theology as to say:

"By calling attention to the doctrine of revelation we have pointed to the most vital concern of Barth. Only those who put the emphasis upon this aspect of his theology truly understand him and the extraordinary place which has been allotted him in the theological world." 1.

The fact of the ontological distinction between time and eternity which Barth maintains, leads him to posit a theory of revelation in which God chooses to enter the temporal realm by means of some revelation in which we are to become conscious that "Deus Dixit", God speaks. Even in this revelation, however, God does not become known to man. Rather, through it, God comes to man, but "only transcendentally, invisibly, and incognito."

"According to Brunner, 'That which is known, that which is continuous with my knowledge, is not revelation and not faith. Revelation is transcendent, it comes from the other side, and cannot therefore not be bound up continuously with my knowledge. It breaks through my knowledge connection. It cannot therefore, be known as true, but only believed as such' 2.

This view of revelation is based upon the belief in the total otherness of God, his utter transcendence, and thus revelation is of the nature of miracle: an intervention into the natural order not to be explained by "natural Laws". Because these revelations are instances of eternity breaking

1. Pauck, Ibid, p 25.

2. Quoted by Zerbe, ibid, p. 179.



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through into time, they are not "historical events" to be dated such and such a "time". Rather, they are eternal "Onenesses", and as such they are transcendent to "time" and persist throughout "time". The idea is illustrated by the concept of the ever-present Christ, Jesus Christ, yesterday, today the same, and forever. And it is Christ who is the supreme revelation of God.

"Revelation is the utterly 'once-for-all' hence the absolutely decisive. This is so fundamentally true that one could reverse the sentence and say that the once-for-all and the decisive thing is revelation. Only since Christ and through Christ have both Oneness and decisiveness in the absolute sense." 1.

In the advent of Christ we have resolved the tension between God and Man, the impossibility has become possible, eternity was embodied in time - (but not as an historical incident).

"In the name Jesus Christ, two worlds meet and touch, two planes intersect, the one known the other unknown. The one was created by, God, but is fallen from its original union with God, and is therefore, the world needing to be redeemed... the world of flesh, men, and things. This known plane was cut into by another, the unknown world of the Father - the world of the original redemption... the point of intersection of these two planes is in Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus of History, born of David according to the flesh. Jesus as the Christ is to us the unknown plane which cuts perpendicularly through from above this plane to us. Jesus as the Christ can only be understood within historical phenomena as a problem, as a 'Myth'; Jesus as the Christ brings the world of the Father, of whom within historical phenomena we can and shall know nothing, to us." 2.

In other words, it is not Jesus of Nazareth who is the revela-

1. Brunner, Quoted by Zerbe, loc, cit.

2. Wood, Karl Barth, Prophet and Theologian, p. 14,



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tion of God, who represents God in the Flesh, but rather it is in the Christ crucified, the risen Christ, that God is revealed. The human nature of Jesus can offer us no more than can the human nature of any man; but the Risen Christ reveals to us God the Father.

"The human nature of God is a creation of the triune God, created and taken over for this, to be the vessel of the Redeemer, the self-revealing person of God, but still a creature and therefore not the revealer himself. The Jesus of history, without the content of the divine essence, the dearest Lord Jesus of the mystic and the pietist, the Teacher of Wisdom and the Friend of Man, the goal of exalted humanity of Schleiermacher - is an empty throne without a king, the warm adoration of whom is a deifying of the creature and nothing else." 1.

But there are other revelations than the resurrection of Christ - "Onenesses" as the Barthians call them. According to Brunner there are at least four such Onenesses, and one might also add others to those he mentions:

"Christian mythos is characterized by four things: Creation, fall, atonement, redemption. These are wholly invisible and are 'here' only in faith. They are absolutely fundamental and form a unit. These four points are of the 'same dimension'; they all pertain to the dividing line between time and eternity. Not only do these four points form an indissoluble unity; but each can have taken place only once... In the center of this Oneness stands the revelation in Jesus Christ." 2.

Other "Onenesses" which might add to these four of Brunner's are suggested by Zerbe; the institution of baptism, of the Lord's Supper, regeneration, and the second coming of Christ.

"Christ" is synonymous with the Word of God.

1. Wood, Ibid. pp 14-15. (Quoting Karl Barth.)

2. Zerbe, op.cit. p.180.



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"Christ" is synonymous with the word of God.



Concerning the Word of God Barth is opposed to the Schleiermachian thesis that the Word of God is found in our own consciousness, or the consciousness of the Church. It is not found within our own consciousness but comes to us from without. It is God himself as opposed to any truth that we might discover.

There are several avenues through which that Truth comes to us, through which we become aware of the Word of God. It comes to us through Christian preaching and in Christian conversations. That which distinguishes it as Christian preaching and conversations is its content of God's Word.

"It is responsible speech, speech worthy of being believed; it is God's word in the husk of man's word. But it is not a speaking from heaven, but shares in the transiency of all human work. While the Preacher ventures to speak of God, it is a venture that is impossible something that he must do, and yet cannot do. Barth's conception of Christian preaching is that of kerygma, the message of a herald who speaks to us because he is commanded and what he is commanded." 1.

The Word of God comes to us through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It must not be thought from this that Barth believes the Scriptures, per se, to be the infallible Word of God. On the contrary, for Barth too, the Bible is a human document, subject to historical criticism, and representing a collection of ancient literature.

"He (Barth) rejects any doctrine of verbal inspiration or inerrancy which would make the Bible a work of heavenly dictation in place of a 'witness' conditioned by men. It is human words we hear, not God himself but human words

1. John McConnachie, Significance of Karl Barth pp. 94-95.



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about God coming to us through sinful men to whom God ~~has~~ spoken. There must therefore, be the possibility of error, the possibility that the human reaction or response was mistaken. But Barth believes that 'the Word' can be found in the words. Scripture~~x~~ is the Word of God in so far as it is witness to Revelation... The books of the Bible are not the Word of God because they are in the Canon, they are in the Canon because the Church acknowledges that they contain the Word of God..."<sup>1</sup>.

"It is not the ~~right~~ human thoughts about God, which form the ~~content~~ of the Bible, but the right divine thoughts about men. The Bible tells us ~~not~~ how we should talk with God, but what He says to us; not how we find the way to him, but how he finds the way to us; not the right relation in which we must place ourselves to him, but the covenant which he has sealed once for all <sup>and then</sup> who are Abraham's spiritual children."<sup>2</sup>.

The Words of the Bible do not reveal God - they merely are the "empty channel in which, for other men, in other times, the waters of life flowed," they only point towards Something which lies beyond all our experiences, but which nevertheless may yet arouse in us the same longing and expectation which filled those earlier people. And in that longing and expectation God makes himself known to us; even, as Pascal says, we find the sun when in the bright light of noonday we seek it, or we find the water when seeking for it in the sea. Then it is that in our own conscience we may know that God has spoken to us. For the conscience is the only place between heaven and earth where God's righteousness is manifest.

"As with a flare of trumpets from another world it interrupts one's reflections concerning his duties, to family, calling, and country. It interrupts even the cultivation of his religious thought and feelings! It comes with its

1. McConnachie, Ibid, pp. 95-96.

2. Barth, Word of God and Word of Man, pp.43.



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(To this quotation Professor Wood has appended a note: "If  
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In neither of these first two channels does  
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There are two means through which the Word of  
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1. Barth, Ibid, p. 10.

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"the Word of God spoken to prophets and apostles, in its immediate original form, the actual Word of God without the Medium of Scripture, without the service of the Church, the Word spoken in history, but on the border of history, to which Barth gives the designation Urgeschichte. This Deus Dixit, of which we have the witness in the Scriptures, is what makes Scripture ~~be~~ be the Word of God. It is the living Hand that holds the Canon and points the way, and sets men forward on the march... This Urgeschichte is a historical event which is not merely historical event, but has God's Word in it for us. As such it is a miracle, and as a miracle is distinct from other historical events,,,,. It follows then that while REvelation is to be found in history, A history in general is not Revelation...."1.

Even here however, we have not the perfect Word of God, for though the Word comes direct and unmediated to the prophets and apostles, their finitude admits the possibility of an imperfect reception of that Word. Thus when the prophet or apostle speaks it is not the Word of God which he tells us, but about the Word of God. The Message that has come to him from on high has become warped by its reception in the finite realm.

Alone in Jesus Christ does the perfect form of the Word of God stand revealed. Here in the Christ is God's Word in persona, in the flesh.

"Here truth and actuality meet. The Word. (Eternal Truth) is made flesh (Actuality). The one revelation which is without reservation or limitation is Jesus Christ, God's Son, because or deflected by any contradiction or sin in His nature. In Him the pure word of God has broken through into the profane sphere." 2.

*(The truth in him is not broken)*

Barth's view of Christ is both historical and

1. McConnachie, *ibid*, p. 101.
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super-historical. Jesus of Nazareth is simply an historical character of no more significance than Saul of Tarsus or any other man of his day. As such a person we may study his early life, and try to reconstruct the life of Jesus during the years of approximately 1-30 A.D. Such a reconstruction however, will tell us nothing of Jesus the Christ. It is the Christ who is the perfect revelation of God, who is the Word of God made flesh. In him do we see the Father, Jesus Christ is Immanuel, God-with-us.

The Advent season is our annual honoring of the truth that Christ is Immanuel. Even as the heavenly choir filled the starry-sky with its canticle to the newborn King, so the Word of God came to man as they had never heard it before, so the Eternal God came to the temporal realm and filled the hearts of men. It is no wonder that the Advent season is the heart of The Church Life; it evidences for all time that the Word of God was made flesh and dwelt on earth among men. In the marvel and sanctity of his lowly birth Jesus is Immanuel, God-with-us.

As the Father in heaven is all compassion, so too, the Son, as the Father's emissary, is all compassion. The life of Christ is marked with evidences of all-embracing compassion. In reverent search he hunted out all who needed him and to them he brought relief and comfort and renewed courage.

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"'Jesus, ' says Barth, 'Seeks us'. He is different from all others who seek us in this, that he has compassion on us and not on himself. He is the one who, under all circumstances finds us. The human aspect of Christ's revelations of the Father is coming to have a larger place in the mind of Barth. We cannot say enough of Jesus, he says, yet he does not forget that Jesus, is nowhere at home here on earth." 1.

"Jesus is Immanuel, God-with-us in the might of his redeeming love on the cross. Immanuel with sinners! He who is guiltless takes the place of our punishment. He who has no compassion for himself, is free to have compassion on us. Jesus Christ, that means God, in the place of my guilt. It is in the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ that the wonder of this new world of Divine Mercy bursts fully through, and becomes the crowning wonder of Revelation." 2.

Not the man Jesus, who walked the dusty highways of Nazareth, not the Jesus who "loafed by the shores of Gallilee," not the Jesus who taught and prayed and healed and helped, he is not the Word of God; Rather, the Jesus of Golgotha, the Jesus of the Upper Room, the Jesus of the Damascus experience, the Jesus of the road to Emmaus, : he is the Word of God echoing deathlessly in the corridors of time. The Open Tomb gloriously proclaims the Word of God. The Cross of Death is the promise of Life. In Him, the incarnate Word of God, the earthly vehicle of the Divine Word, the God-Man, alone does the perfect revelation of the Word of God come to man. And because that advent was "Urgeschichte" the Word of God remains with us to this day. The Word not only came to earth twenty centuries ago, it comes to us today, and for us individually Jesus is never Immanuel until we have

1. McConnachie, *Ibid*, p. 113.
2. McConnachie, *Ibid*, p. 114.



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heard that Word and have answered resolutely, with body, mind, and spirit, "Yea, Lord! Yea, Lord!" to its demand. Only then does the Word of God come to us directly even through Him who is that Word.

Thus far we have discussed the position of Barth, his cosmic-eschatological dualism, his conception of God, and his theory of revelation. These may be considered the fundamental theses of the Barthian theology, and sufficient to render an introduction to that movement. In the following section we shall present the value of Barthian theology, its defects, and a short apologia.

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Critique of Karl Barth

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In any consideration of the Barthian theology one must ever bear in mind the fundamental philosophical thesis upon which the whole "system" is based: the qualitative difference between time and eternity, and its corollary, the finite has no capacity for the infinite. Unless one is willing to grant to Barth this dualism of time and eternity one cannot accept his theology, although it may have value for even those who refuse to accept it, as a corrective of false and exaggerated views. Barth contends that he seeks to do no more than this, and that his "theology" started originally as "marginal notes" with that view in mind. But Barth has been replaced by "Barthianism". The teachings of Barth have been made into a "system" or "school" by the group which has attached itself to him, and as a consequence Barthian theology has assumed proportions far beyond the original expectancy or wish of its founder. It is as a corrective to humanistic tendencies and to the doctrine of the Divine Immanence that Barth first raised his voice, and it is as a warning against carrying these two tendencies too far, to the point where man fraternizes with God and thus removes any significances from him, that Barth has made a worthy contribution. Against the humanizing of Christ Barth again opposes Christ the Redeemer, the Savior and reaffirms man's need for a Savior. Against the tendency to make of our preaching a combination of vaudeville show and chautauqua platform Barth insists that the sole function of the preacher is to preach the Word of God, to be derived from



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which the "state" is based, the political, the

historical, the social, and the religious, are all

of importance for the individual. Unless one is willing

to treat the state as a mere machine, and to deny the

notion of its personality, which it may have, and to

view it as a mere collection of laws and regulations, and

as a mere instrument of power, it is impossible to

understand it as a living organism, and as a

being which is capable of growth and development, and

which is capable of feeling and thought, and which

is capable of acting and reacting, and which is

capable of being affected and of affecting others, and

which is capable of being loved and of loving, and

which is capable of being saved and of saving, and

which is capable of being glorified and of glorifying, and

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a return to the spiritual warmth of the Bible where we find the record of men whose lives were touched by the finger of God as he broke through time. Against the present emphasis upon the so-called "social Gospel" (which has led many people to suppose that there is a distinction between the "social" and the "personal" gospel) Barth protests that there is but one gospel and that of the "word of God, unrelated in any significant way to the world" (and thus transient and wholly temporal) movements such as socialism, communism and the like. His will will prevail though it take a million years, time means nothing, it must be remembered, in comparison with eternity, since it is still His world. As a corrective then to tendencies in modern theology which are humanistic, Barth's position is well taken, and he is receiving commendation for this stand even from those who disagree with him on specific points of his theology. Some of these disagreements will now be considered.

#### Inadequacies.

The main point of contention which the critics of Barth have raised has to do with the basic principle of the whole Barthian theology, the dualism between time and eternity. In The Doctrine of Redemption, Dr. Knudson devotes two pages to a refutation of this thesis of Barth's (1.) and the line which his argument takes is that when the qualitative difference between time and eternity is interpreted metaphysically



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it is a false antithesis because the supposed ontological dualism underlying that thesis is a ~~false~~ dualism. The world does not have ontological reality distinct from the Divine Personality, as Barth's realistic world-view would infer nor does time have a qualitative difference from eternity which leads to his metaphysical dualism of time and eternity. According to Knudson

"There is no reality called time standing opposed to a reality called eternity." 1.

"'Time' is a term that we apply to a changing mode of existence, and the essential idea that underlies it is that of dependence. 'Eternity' on the other hand, applies to an absolutely self-identical mode of existence, and the essential idea that underlies it is that of independence." 2.

It is to be noted here that Dr. Knudson defines both time and eternity as modes of existence rather than as metaphysical realities. Their difference, and what might appear to be an antithesis between them, lies in the essential underlying each of them: dependence underlying the concept of time and independence underlying eternity. But this very difference is the source of their actual kinship, for

"a temporal world presupposes an eternal God, upon whom it is dependent, and this dependence implies that the eternal God is somehow present as the sustaining ground of the world." 3.

The metaphysical dualism which Barth has will result in a "deep-inner discord" in our religious belief, Dr. Knudson feels; consequently it must be given up in favor of a metaphysical monism which is consistent with a doctrine of a Creator and an

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Immanent God, instead of necessitating a Creator and absentee God.

Dr. Knudson also criticises Barth on the basis of the chasm between God and Man which characterizes this theology. He says:

"...The attempt to establish a sharp antithesis not only between faith and mysticism, but between faith and religious experience as a whole must be set down as a theological misadventure. For one thing, the supposed or rather presupposed 'endless qualitative difference between time and eternity' is an arbitrary assumption. Religion no doubt requires a contrast between the human and the divine, but it also requires a kinship between them, if our religious needs are to be fully met. To insist on the contrast at the expense of the kinship is to do violence to faith and reason alike. Furthermore, 'revelation' and 'faith' have their proper place and find their true meaning only within religious experience. To detach them from it is to reduce them to empty abstractions. And if we seek to give them content and reality by importing them in some miraculous way into the stream of history or of human consciousness, we have no means of distinguishing them from their immediate human environment except by appealing to some human standard objective or subjective. To make them the tests of their own divine character is to leave them still in a superhuman isolation. The fact is that there is no way of drawing a hard-and-fast line between the human and divine. To oppose faith to mystical experience on the ground that one is divine and the other human is to fall into an obscure supernaturalism." 1.

And Dr. Brightman also criticises Barth here and says that,

"We make the way to God artificially hard when we think of him as utterly separate from the world. If the God that we seek had no connection with our own experiences or with the world in which we live, save that he once created the heavens and the earth and now lives in transcendent retirement and solitary exaltation, there is no hope in the human search for God.

1. Knudson, The Doctrine of God, p. 97.







Such a God leaves no clues or traces in his world." 1.

Others (such as Dr. Bixler<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Macintosh, and Dr. Brown) also criticise Barth on God's utter transcendence of man and the impossibility of Man's apprehending or comprehending God.

Because of the transcendence of God, and the incapacity of the finite for the <sup>in</sup>finite, God is, according to Barth, an unknowable God. Here, too, many modern theologians disagree with Barth. Dr. Brightman says that

"God is by definition a being who stands in relation to everything that happens: his will, and creative power, his purposes are involved in some way in every fact in the entire universe. Every fact implies God: God is revealed in every fact." 2.

The relation of God to the world is that of purposer-purposed, and in the events of the world can be seen the evidence of the purposer. In the order and seeming purposiveness of the universe are seen evidence of the existence of an intelligence behind the whole creation, ascribed to God. God as a supreme Person is both transcendent to and immanent in the universe of this creation. The physical world is conceived of as being one mode of his activity. By virtue of his immanence in the universe we may see in <sup>the</sup> rationality and order ~~in that universe~~ evidence we may see in the rationality and order ~~in that universe~~ <sup>of that universe,</sup> evidences of the intelligence and purposiveness which is ascribed to him. In these evidences of His nature which man reads in nature and within his own personality, man finds the basis for his faith in God, and on them he bases his conception of God and of the "Will of God." As He places himself

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2. Brightman, OP, cit. p 144.



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2. Brightman, *Op. cit.* p. 122.



in close harmony with the will of God thus revealed to him, and as he engages in prayer and worship and spiritual meditation, it happens at times that he has an unusual experience which he is convinced is an experience of God. This mystical experience is the foundation of the theology of the Evangelical Churches, and is a relationship to God which such men as Dr. Knudson and Dr. Brightman also affirm. God makes himself known to man by revelations which are not, as the Barthian thinks, supernatural in the sense that they transcend the natural laws, but man sees in the very laws and in the facts of nature the revelation of God. This conception of God and of his relation to the world and to man is of course antithetical to the Barthian conception which denies religious experience, and denies the legitimacy of reading out of nature, (its order and seeming purposiveness) characteristics of God.

For many people Barth's position concerning Jesus Christ is unsatisfactory. Our customary view is one which feels that essentially Christ was human, even as we, though in an especially close relationship to and consciousness of God, our Heavenly Father. We look to Luke 2:52 and read that "Jesus advanced in wisdom stature and in favour with God and men" and we take it to mean that as Jesus passed through the successive stages of childhood, boyhood, youth, and manhood he showed forth in turn the graces and perfections of each, and that he increasingly was the recipient of the favor of both man and God. Here surely the humanity of Jesus is expressed, and the



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growth of that humanity into the perfection which has raised him to <sup>be</sup> the archetype of Divine Humanity. Jesus the man of Nazareth is <sup>for</sup> Barth no significant figure, and the life of Jesus is of little consequence compared with the glory of Christ upon the Cross and the risen Christ. It is only as the Resurrected Christ that Jesus became the Way and the Truth; the Risen Christ is the eternal promise of God that Resurrection is for Men, that after this temporal, sinful existence Man will again enter upon the <sup>plane</sup> of the eternal in the Resurrected Life. Here the Critics of Barth take strong <sup>x</sup>ception to him.

"This Theology fails to make room for a real incarnation.' To quote Dr. Raven, it introduces Christ as a 'Divine Invader' brought in from beyond to be our Savior, but not as One 'Who took on Him the seed of Abraham', and who can be 'touched with the feelings of our infirmities.' 'This Divine Invader', he says, 'Who came in the flesh is not Jesus of Nazareth. His incarnation is a theophany. It belongs to the region of mythology.'" 1.

We have here discussed five of the more important criticisms of Barth: his dualism of time and eternity; his emphasis upon the chasm between God and Man; his conception of God as Unknown; his emphasis upon the transcendence of God; and his interpretation of Jesus Christ. In <sup>the</sup> short apologia which follows the answer which is given to these criticisms by the exponents of Barthianism will be presented.

#### Apologia.

Any philosophical criticism of Barth misses its point (if it seeks to do justice at the same time that it



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Apologetics.

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criticises), for Barth makes no pretensions to a philosophical system or to a system which is "philosophically" consistent with any particular philosophical school. Theology is to begin where philosophy ends, and the two are to be ever in such a relationship: two different categories. Dr. McConnachie says,

"...to assail Barth on philosophical grounds is to fail completely to understand him... It is not in our power he says, to ward off the incursion of philosophy into Dogmatics, but he is determined that philosophy shall be kept in its proper place alongside theology, and shall not be allowed to control it, as it has done in the past. Too long has theology been regarded as a branch of philosophy, without independence of its own, unable to maintain its own ground, and compelled to appeal to philosophy to provide it with a foundation... In his new Dogmatics... Barth explicitly renounces all reliance on philosophy for support or justification of his theology, separating at this point even from his friends Gogarten, Brunner, and Bultmann," 1.

Despite the defence of Barth's philosophical scepticism by Dr. McConnachie, I do not feel that it can be accepted. It seems to hark back to the scepticism of the Sophists whose denial of reason was so completely refuted by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Truth in religion is as surely the goal of philosophy, of reason, as is truth in any other line of human interest, and is not to be segregated as Barth would have it. Such philosophical scepticism has in the past been defended by some theologians as being necessary to religious authority; it provides for supernatural guidance to reveal the Truth which the finite mind of Man could not otherwise perceive. Specifically, since the time of Kant such a basis of religious authority is seen as unnecessary and unfounded.

1. McConnachie. The Barthian Theology. pp. 288-289.



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We now believe that even religious authority must be rational:

"It must not only find an extraneous support in reason but must be an outgrowth of it. There must be in religion and in its institutions something that both expresses and responds to a rationally defensible need of human nature. What we are concerned about today, therefore, is to establish not the religious incapacity of the natural man, but, rather, the naturalness of religion and validity of that part of our nature that finds in religion its satisfaction. Occasionally religion is represented as wholly independent of knowledge, but this is a radical mistake, Religion implies ~~the~~ essential trustworthiness of the human mind. *Indeed, the whole religious appeal rests on the assumption that these ~~these~~ <sup>human faculties</sup> are reliable* that belong to the higher ranges of our being and these, of course, include our reason. Any other view would be as inconsistent with the truth of religion as with the dignity of human personality." 1.

Concerning the specific philosophical problems involved in the time-eternity dualism, I frankly admit that I am unable to present a personal evaluation. I recognize the abstruseness of the problems and the efforts of philosophers to solve the riddle involved therein. But I am unable to resolve the problem even to my own satisfaction. Consequently in this paper I shall not attempt any further discussion of the time-eternity criticism. I do think that Barth has the right to posit such an hypothesis and to construct thereon his theology until his thesis is proved false. In the interim his theology may be of constructive value even to those who cannot accept it in toto.

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1. Knudson. Philosophy of Personalism. p. 95.



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"It must not only find an expression support in reason but must be an outgrowth of it. There must be in religion and in its institutions something that both expresses and responds to a rationally determinable need of human nature. What we are concerned about today, therefore, is to establish not the religious authority of the natural man, but, rather, the rationality of religion and validity of that part of our nature that finds in religion its satisfaction. Occasional religion is represented as wholly independent of knowledge, but this is a radical mistake. Religion implies the essential trustworthiness of the human mind. Indeed, the whole of our appeal rests on the assumption that there belong to the higher ranges of our being and these, of course, include our reason. Any other view would be as inconsistent with the truth of religion as with the dignity of human personality." I.

Concerning the specific philosophical problems involved in the time-eternity dualism, I frankly admit that I am unable to present a personal evaluation. I recognize the abstractness of the problems and the efforts of philosophers to solve the riddle involved therein. But I am unable to resolve the problem even to my own satisfaction. Consequently in this paper I shall not attempt any further discussion of the time-eternity dualism. I do think that Barth has the right to posit such an hypothesis and to connect it with his theology until his thesis is proved false. In the interim his theology may be of constructive value even to those who cannot accept it in toto.

The chasm between "God and Man, the utter Otherness of God and the impossibility of Man's knowing God are often I. Lundström. Philosophy of Personalism, p. 95.



included in a single criticism that

"This theology makes of God a distant, transcendent, and Wholly Other Being, and ignores the Divine Immanence!" 1.

"The Barthian doctrine of God as the Wholly Other - totaliter aliter - has clashed with a favourite truth of our time, that of the Divine Immanence, and has proved one of the chief stumbling blocks which this Theology has encountered. Is not God present in Nature, it is asked, is He not present in man, is He not the ground of all being? It may be that in the earlier days of the movement which set out to be a corrective, the doctrine of God, as the Wholly Other, was expressed with a onesidedness which gave rise to some criticism that was justified. But few of these criticisms will survive a reading of Barth's new Dogmatics. Apart from Revelation, as he says, God is incomprehensible, a Deus Absconditus. Even to describe HIM as the Other assumes a knowledge of Him which by nature we do not possess. The word therefore is ambiguous. Barth now seldom uses it. Although what it stands for is still a very distinctive feature of his theology... Barth does not deny 'God's moral and spiritual immanence in the world!' What he contends against is the particular notion of immanence, the philosophical doctrine of identity between God and Man, which confounds God with the world, and the world with God and is nothing other than a disguised pantheism.. God is immanent in the world, according to Barth; but it is as God the Other, who does not cease in His immanence to be God the Lord." 2.

"...the position which he attacks is not that which makes God conterminous with the world, but that which regards the world as the luminous revelation of God, rather than as the cloak which hides the God-head. He addresses us who detect no paradox in St. Paul's assertion that 'the invisible things of God are visible in his works - even his eternal power and Godhead.'" 3.

It is not against the theory of the immanence of God that Barth revolts, but rather against the extremes to which that theory has been developed, which has led to the

1. McConnachie, The Barthian Theology. p. 295.
2. McConnachie, Ibid, pp. 296-297,
3. Lowrie, The Theology of Crisis. p. 114.



included in a single criticism that

"This theology makes of God a distant, transcendent, and wholly Other Being, and ignores the Divine Immanence!"

"The Bartheian doctrine of God as the Wholly Other - totally other - has clashed with a favorable view of our time, that of the Divine Immanence, and has proved one of the chief stumbling blocks which this Theology has encountered. Is not God present in Nature, in its sacred, in its not present in man, in its not the ground of all being? Is it not in the earlier days of the movement which set out to be a corrective, the doctrine of God, as the Wholly Other, was expressed with a one-sidedness which gave rise to some criticism that was justified. But few of these criticisms will survive a reading of Barth's new Dogmatics. Apart from revelation, as he says, God is incomprehensible. Van to describe Him as the Other, is a knowledge of Him which by nature we do not possess. The word therefore is empty. Barth now seldom uses it. Although what it stands for is still a very distinctive feature of his theology... Barth does not deny 'God's eternal and spiritual Immanence in the world!' What he contends against is the particular notion of Immanence, the philosophical doctrine of identity between God and Man, which contounds God with the world, and the world with God and is nothing other than a disguised pantheism. God is Immanent in the world, according to Barth; but it is as God the Other, who does not cease in His Immanence to be God the Lord." S.

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1. McGonaghy, The Bartheian Theology, p. 235.
2. McGonaghy, Ibid., pp. 235-237.
3. Lowrie, The Theology of Christ, p. 114.



deification of man as containing within himself all the divinity which he needs for his own salvation.

"This God is also immanent in the spirit of man but it is as God the Other, God the Lord, Who is not to be identified with our religious ideals or with our better self. Barth holds that the mystical self-deification of man, of which there is much in current thought, rests on a fundamental error. The pride of man continually dims his perception of the reality of his existence until he imagines he can regard himself as a creator, whereas he is only a poor creature who returns to the dust whence he came." 1.

Barth's Christology is based upon the New Testament emphasis upon the Godhead of Christ. His first concern in the Dogmatics, according to Dr. McConnachie,

"is to maintain in its fullness the God-head of Christ. He rejects the view that the Godhead of Jesus was arrived at by the gradual apotheosis of a great man, out of which arose the enthusiastic impression that: 'Here is God!' Equally he rejects the view which makes Jesus a theophany, a myth, the personification of the idea of God-head, and which puts in question the concrete humanity of His earthly existence, and even his historical actuality. He sees no possibility, in either of these ways, of ending other than in an aporia. If the early Church had described Jesus as the Son of God in the sense which those two conceptions presupposed, then it would have rightly been expelled from the fellowship of the Old Testament Church. For what could the idealisation of a man, or the personification of an idea be other than just what the Old Testament understood as the setting up and worshipping of an idol, as an unworthy rival to Jehovah? 'The content of the New Testament, at any rate, is this,' says Barth, 'that in Jesus God is to be found, while Jesus Himself, as other than God, is not to be found at all.'" 2.

Our apologia does not purport to be a complete apologia, in which the arguments of the opponents of the new

1. McConnachie, The Barthian Theology. p. 297.
2. McConnachie, Ibid, pp. 314-315--.



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Theology are weighed and evaluated. It seeks merely to present the line of defense which is adopted by those who defend Barth against those who attack.

After a consideration of the principal arguments against Barth, and an appraisal of the defense offered, some <sup>still</sup> evaluation of the movement may <sup>^</sup> be made. That has already been done in the first division of this section: where we presented the values of Barthianism before considering the objections to it. As a corrective to modern tendencies which are deifying man and humanizing God, which are negating the original purpose and function to the Church, and which are laying aside the Bible in favor of secular literature, the new movement has an important and valuable message to offer. But as a system of theology to be accepted in preference to that which we have as a heritage from Schleiermacher and those who have followed in his footsteps, the question is still open. Barth is appealing - but not quite satisfactory, he still leaves one hungry to know and to feel the comforting presence of what one is convinced is God.

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The New York Times Magazine (for February 5, 1934), carried an article entitled "The Student Struggle for a Faith." This feature, by Dr. George W. Gray, is typical of many such articles that have appeared which seek to reaffirm the contention that the youth of today are honestly desirous of discovering a faith in which they can believe - one which satisfies an intense

Evaluation of Karl Barth

for

Religious Education

the student. The statement from Yale, and from Harvard, the second from Yale, both statements are honest petitions that someone point out to them the way, the certain path to God. The Harvard senior concluded with the assertion that, "Among my associates, the literary group, I haven't met a student who is an atheist. They all believe in God, but the problem is the approach to God. I don't find it in the existing churches, and we want it. If someone would show us the way we'd run to him." The attitude of the college students met by Dr. Gray in all sections of the country is, he says,

"...a groping, a groping for reality in the experience of religious truth - and this is true not only of those described at Harvard, but also of the scattered, yearning, inquiring, individuals one finds in colleges throughout the land."

From this article, as well as from the experience of the author of this paper, who believes that Dr. Gray has aptly expressed the true religious attitude of the young college student of to-day, it is apparent that somewhere along the line of

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religious instruction the churches of to-day are failing in their prime function. They are not inculcating in growing minds any religious certainty that will tide them over the seeming denials of Authority met in <sup>the</sup> secular educational process. Despite the vast expenditures for equipment, for trained directors, and despite the emphasis given to the project of religious education in practically all of our churches, for some reason which <sup>ought</sup> to be discoverable, the young people are not finding in such programs a religious certainty which is at all commensurate with the effort and money expended. There are entertaining programs which hold their interest, there are recreational and socializing projects which may be reflected in their community activities, But is this essentially Christian education? Is this properly, Religious Education? It would seem that in the college and university towns of this country, where especially elaborate programs of religious education are carried on for the benefit of the students, that such young people ought to find there the faith for which the students in Mr. Gray's article are "groping". Somewhere in the process something appears to be missing fire. Can it be that our religious education programs are not so religious as they are educational? Barth, for one, thinks so. And here Barth might be pardoned an "I told you so..." His concern with Religious education enters at exactly that point, and it is precisely there that he has driven the wedge of his theology.



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Barth's contention that the sole raison d'être of the Christian Church is to present the Word of God is not limited to the pulpit. Every avenue of expression open to the church must be consecrated to that single holy mission: every activity must be directed to an exposition of the Word of God. So too, with Religious Education.. It must educate in the only legitimate material it has: the Word of God.

"Barth holds that the Church must consider much more earnestly than it has hitherto done, the question as to the recte docere Evangelium - the right teaching of the Gospel to the young."<sup>1</sup>

Barth is aware of the facts that appear in Mr. Gray's article - that the young people of to-day are not turning away from the churches because they no longer believe in that for which the Church stands: rather, that they do not go to the churches because they are not finding there that for which, unconsciously perhaps, they are truly hungry: the assurance of the Word of God as a living and commanding factor in their lives.

"Young people are weary of mere views, ideas, and counsels, but they may be opener than we imagine to truth, to a real, directing, authoritative Word of GOD. Every voice is crying out for something positive and thought; the young may not know it, what they hunger for is a living and commanding Word of God. Such a Word the Church has not been giving them because it has lost it. It has been giving them instead what it calls 'Religious Education'... This whole system of Religious Education, which is being pursued, is built on certain presuppositions which cannot be reconciled with the teachings of the New Testament." 2.

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According to Dr. McConnachie the Barthian Theology has three charges against such "Religious Education."

1. "To begin with, it is based on a false anthropology, on the idea that man in the core of his nature is good, and that what we have to do in religious education is to draw out the good in him, and bring it to expression."

2. "This scheme of religious education is based, secondly, on the false principle of autonomy, derived from Descartes... and applied to the training of the young."

3. "It is founded on a false principle of communicating the Christian Revelation." 1.

Obviously, the first of these charges grows out of the principle which Barth holds concerning the sinful nature of man. "We are all sinners in need, desperate need, of redemption. The very fact of man's finitude is proof that he is separated from God, the Heavenly Father, and that he can only return to the bosom of his Father through the saving grace of the Crucified Christ. Since the finite can never contain the infinite, it is presumptuous to think that any system of religious education, though you may call it Religious Education capitalized, can bring man any closer to Him who is Totally Other. Barth calls this doctrine of the innate goodness of man "The sweet song of the old serpent", and against it he is especially vehement.

The one inexorable fact which all men face is the fact of death. Barth declares it to be the supreme law of the world in which we live:

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"in it the whole riddle of our existence is summarized and focused; and in its inevitability we are reminded of the wrath which hangs over the man of the world and the world of man" 1.

All that exists in the temporal realm, separated by an unbridgeable chasm, qualitatively different from the Eternal, must pass through the cleansing fire of death before again joining the Eternal Order. The world and all that dwell therein stands condemned, under the shadow of death. The world stands condemned because

"it unwillingly participates in the perversity of men and shares their damaged relationship with God." 2.

This "damaged relationship with God" is a consequence of Adam, "through whom sin entered the world." 3.

Here is not meant at all the familiar story of Adam and Eve in the Garden heeding the temptation of the serpent. It is not any historical Adam to whom Barth ascribes the Original Sin, not to any act of that historical Adam. Adam as the symbol of the first man represents all men in that he is temporal and consequently unGodly,

"By the first Adam we mean the natural, earthly, historical man; and it is this man who must be overcome." 4.

Any system of Religious Education then, which ignores this sinfulness, this condemned status of man, is, from Barth's viewpoint, not only untrue to the nature of man, but foredoomed to failure by its very dependence upon predestined creatures of sin. And for its protagonists to

1. Barth, Epistle to the Romans, pp. 166-167.
2. Barth, ibid, - 169.
3. Barth, ibid, - p. 170.
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1. Barth, Outline to the Doctrine of the Church, pp. 100-101.
2. Barth, ibid., p. 100.
3. Barth, ibid., p. 100.
4. Barth, ibid., p. 100.



believe that it can kindle any divine spark within its pupils is the height of folly.

The second charge of Barth against modern Religious Education was directed toward its "false principle of autonomy derived from Descartes." Descartes had established the autonomy of the self with his cogito, ergo sum, and it is to this principle that Barth contends the religious educationists have turned,

"The child is to be brought up to express himself, and to find his own norms and values inside himself. There can be no such thing as the law of Another calling for obedience imposed on him." 1.

Here again the Barthian conception of the incapacity of man forms the basis of the objection. But may we point out that this criticism is invalid against such a system of Religious Education, *as is developed at the Boston University School of Religious Education*, where the norms and the laws and the values for Religious Education are grounded in the ideals and ethics of the New Testament Jesus rather than within the individual, as they are for instance in the "Chicago School" projects for Religious Education.

Barth's third criticism was that "this scheme of religious education is founded on a false principle of communicating the Christian Revelation." Continuing this criticism, Dr. McConnachie says,

"The great aim of modern pedagogics is the rational communication of truth. It proceeds from the presupposition of the autonomy of reason in matters of religious knowledge as of other knowledge, and seeks to convey a direct knowledge of

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God, in that it makes God intelligible. It proposes to build up ab extra in the mind of the child an adequate conception of God, attribute by attribute, as one would sit down with him on the floor and build a tower of bricks. But we cannot thus make God an object of knowledge. God can only be known as he gives Himself to be known in His Word. There is a religious rationalism which is almost as deadly as secular rationalism. Both are related; both place education in the centre, both seek it in the same way. But the result from the point of view of the Christian Revelation, is disastrous. Instead of leaving in the mind of the child the sense of the wonderful majestic, sovereign God, Who can be known in no human way, the result of these efforts has too often been to set up in the child's mind a poor tedious human idol which he can certainly understand, but which he flings on the rubbish heap as soon as schooldays are over. God the Tremendous, the Hidden One, in every Bible story is betrayed by being explained away to make Him intelligible." 1.

The quotation from McConnachie has been long.

But it involves the important dichotomy of faith and reason which differentiates Barthian Theology from our own; consequently I have quoted practically all of it. The crux of the criticism lies in Barth's insistence that philosophy and theology are paralalled rather than correlative means of access to Truth. Religious knowledge is not a goal of reason, does not lie at the end of any rational process; Religious knowledge comes to man solely through Revelation, and as such is accepted with absolute, unquestioning faith. Where there is any questioning, any attempted reasoning of knowledge, it is not true Religious knowledge, it comes not from God. All Religious knowledge is given to man by the Divine intervention in the temporal order, and as such it is irrational, superrational,

1. McConnachie, *ibid*, -- 185-186.







revelatory. Consequently, for a system of Religious Education to pretend that it teaches the truth about God is sheer pretense without justification. It can only teach man's thoughts, which can never contain the truth about God. All that any system of Religious Education, or any teacher of Religion can do is to point with awed humility: "In this direction lies Truth..."

Dr. Knudson says that this

"powerful advocacy of the theocentric principle is the one great merit of the Barthian theology," 1.

as a protest against the humanizing tendencies in contemporary theology. Nevertheless, there is here, also, a serious defect which Dr. Knudson goes on to point out, that is the separation of theology and philosophy (faith vs reason) insisted upon in the above argument.

"Religious faith cannot be permanently linked up with an impersonal or agnostic type of philosophy. A theology that feeds on scepticism will eventually perish thereby." 2.

Dr. Brightman also criticises Barth on this point by stating that,

"Devout Barthianism is one of the subtle perils of the present; it cuts off religion from the rest of life, and its inevitable outcome is a head hopelessly divided from the heart." 3.

Such a dichotomy it would seem to me would defeat itself in the long run. If there is to be no rational evaluation of what is to be received in the Christian Revelation, how may one be certain that it is either a revelation or Christian? If Barth points to Urgeschichte and says

1. Knudson. "German Fundamentalism", p 765.
2. Knudson, loc, cit.
3. Brightman, Finding God, p.11.



revelatory. Consequently, for a system of religious education to pretend that it teaches the truth about God is sheer pretence without justification. It can only teach man's thoughts, which can never contain the truth about God. All that any system of religious education, or any teacher of Religion can do is to point with awed humility: "In this direction lies Truth..."

Dr. Knudsen says that this "powerful advocacy of the theocentric principle is the one great merit of the Barthian theology." 1. as a protest against the humanistic tendency contemporary theology. Nevertheless, there is here, also, a serious defect which Dr. Knudsen goes on to point out, that is the separation of theology and philosophy (faith vs reason) insisted upon in the above argument.

"Religious faith cannot be permanently linked up with an immanent or agnostic type of philosophy. A theology that leads to agnosticism will eventually cease to be a theology." 2. Dr. Brighman also criticises Barth on this point by stating that,

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Such a dichotomy it would seem to me would defeat itself in the long run. If there is to be no rational evaluation of what is to be received in the Christian revelation, how may one be certain that it is either a revelation or Christian? If Barth points to Unerschlichkeit and says

1. Knudsen, "German Fundamentalism", p. 75.  
2. Knudsen, loc. cit.  
3. Brighman, Finding God, p. 11.



these are Revelations, upon what basis has he reached this conclusion? Absolute, unquestioning, all-certain knowledge because of a non-criticising faith. How does he know ~~he know~~ they are a Revelation from God? He knows; that is all he says. I do not see how he can be doing otherwise than evaluating, perhaps unconsciously and despite himself; and underlying that evaluation is reason. There is partial truth in Barth's position, as Dr. Brightman points out, but its very narrowness precludes its practicability for all people.

"It is true that the profoundest religion has always recognized the supremacy of the divine over the human... [In the Barthian Theology] the place of human initiative, especially of human thought, is crowded down to an almost negligible minimum. Man must simply accept 'the Word of God.' It must be frankly admitted that the highest religious consciousness is more that of being found, of being 'laid hold of' - than of finding... But, outside of miracle, such experience is totally inaccessible to the sceptic or to the seeker who has not yet found a solid basis for any faith in God at all. Nor can it be the only mood of any soul that sincerely desires to find more about God than he now possesses. It would be both unreasonable and irreligious merely to lie passive until the Divine snatches you up and redeems you." 1.

Thus does Barth criticise our present system of religious education. As a corrective to these practices he offers a plan for Religious Education centering about the Word of God. For the teachers of this Religious Education <sup>Barth</sup> has four specific and requisite qualifications.<sup>2</sup>

1. He must himself be a witness to the Word.
2. He must ~~startl~~from a true doctrine of man.
3. He ~~must~~ know what the Bible actually is.

1. Brightman, *ibid.* pp. 26-27.

2. See McConnachie, *ibid.* pp. 189-192.



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1. He must himself be a witness to the Word.
2. He must start from a true doctrine of man.
3. He must know what the Bible actually is.



4. He must have a deep knowledge of the child.

Of the first of these qualifications, Dr.

McConnachie explains that Barth means that the teacher,

"must be a witness, one who has himself been laid hold of by the Word of God, and who speaks, not of this or that, but of the revelation of God in Christ. He must himself live by the Word of God, and by prayer, which alone opens the Scriptures to himself, and to his pupils. He must <sup>place</sup> himself, not beside God, but under God, as witness and teacher, in speech and life, of the Good Tidings of God." 1.

According to the second qualification the teacher must ask himself,

"from what do I begin, from the good in man, or ~~from~~ the grace of God? If he is true to the New Testament and to the Reformers, he will not start from the good in man... The ~~error~~ error of our present religious education is that we have been proceeding from the anthropology of an idealistic humanism instead of that of Christ and of the New Testament. Our Lord Himself has left us in no doubt as to His Doctrine of Man. (Matt. XV:19). 2.

This verse from Matthew records Jesus as saying that, "For out of the heart ~~of~~ proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies." But is this truly representative of His doctrine of man? Is that the meaning of the context in which this verse appears? It does not seem so to me; nor can I conceive that this is any sense represents the true estimate of man held by Him who was given because of Infinite love for man, that all who believe in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Certain scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus - they were continually resorting to such practices - seeking to entrap Him into a

1. McConnachie, *ibid*, p. 189.

2. McConnachie, *ibid*, pp. 189-190.



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confession that he condoned a breach of the Law. They had seen some of the disciples eat bread without first washing their hands. He sought to teach them the folly of their tradition.

"Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man... Do ye not understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." 1.

This does not mean that the nature of man is such that his heart is filled with these things. It seems to ~~me that~~ me to simply mean that the way to tell whether or not a man is defiled is in terms of what he shows he has in his heart. It recalls Proverbs 23:7 - "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Mere eating without washing is no sign. Does he reveal a diseased and corrupt heart by what proceeds from his mouth? That is the Test. How Parth can reconcile such a thesis with the evidences of the concern which Jesus had for men, I do not understand. It throws Jesus into a ridiculous paradox to hold to that thesis of man's nature and at the same time believe the Gospel accounts of the sympathetic solicitation He had for men of all conditions of life.

The third qualification requires that the teacher know what the Bible actually is. Many are the ideas

1. See Matthew 15:1-20.

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current as to what the Bible is. The revealed word of God; the historical record of a particular people; a literary collection of more or less esoteric interest and value; the historical record of an evolving religious ideal. Against all these ideas Barth stands opposed.

"The Bible is not a book, the primary object of which is religious education. It is not a collection of moral patterns. It is not an arsenal of religious truths for the warfare of life. It is not a story-book, out of which we can tell the children all manner of wonderful and unheard-of things. It is not a book of religious heroes, not even is the life story of Jesus told as the life of a religious hero. Nor is it a book of psychological experiences. The men of the Bible are not primarily interested in their own souls. The Bible is the witness to the revelation of God to sinful men in Jesus Christ, the Good News of the gracious God, and as such it is to be taught to the young." 1.

In this fact of the revelation of God to sinful man must the teacher be steeped, and every reading of the Bible to the child must be to bring out the wonder of this revelation. The teacher must not deviate from the Biblical narrative for the purpose of humanization or simplification of the text. To do such is to misuse the Scriptures, and to mistreat the child by giving him a humanized account of that which is non-human, and which could not be human and be of God at the same time.

The final qualification of the teacher is a deep knowledge of the child.

"Every right pedagogical art and psychological insight must be called into activity by the teacher in order that the Christian Revelation as a verbum alienum - the "word of Another -

1. McConnachie. *ibid.* - 190.



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The Bible is not a book, the primary object of which is religious education. It is not a collection of moral precepts. It is not an arsenal of religious truths for the warfare of life. It is not a story-book, out of which we can tell the children all manner of wonderful and unheard-of things. It is not a book of religious heroes, not even is the life story of Jesus told as the life of a religious hero. For it is a book of psychological experiences. The men of the Bible are not primarily interested in their own souls. The Bible is the witness to the revelation of God to sinful men in Jesus Christ, the Good News of the gracious God, and as such it is to be taught to the young." 1.

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The final qualification of the teacher is a deep knowledge of the child. "Every right pedagogical act and psychological insight must be called into activity by the teacher in order that the Christian revelation as a verbum altitum - the Word of Another -



may be planted in the heart of the child." 1

The teacher is to bear in mind the capacity of the child-mind and to present the Word in such a vivid and concrete manner as to be grasped by that mind. But he is not to rewrite the stories of the Bible to fit a situation or to illustrate a point, or to interest and entertain the child. The functions of the teacher is simply to guide the child through the labyrinthine passages in which the Revelation of God is made, that the child may be "brought in touch with the strange new world of God, revealed in Jesus Christ," 2.

"The work of the teacher is a glorious work, but he must remember his boundary; He is a witness, and he shares his own religious life with the child, But he forsakes his proper place, and puts himself in the place of God, if he claims to impart religion, or of him-self to be a life-changer. Only God can give God to a child, since He only is Revealer; only God can give new life to the Child, since he is Life-Changer... The child is to be given a definite content of Religious truth, a doctrina Christi, such as the Reformers insisted on. The Christian Revelation is to be taught, not as a dead dogma, but as a living, gripping Word, calling for obedience... The theme of religious instruction must be the Good News of God in law and in Gospel." 3.

This summarises the constructive corrective of <sup>Paul</sup> Barth for the present system of Religious Education which he attacks so strenuously as being Humanistic and anthropocentric. Before we seek to evaluate the contribution to Religious Education in terms of our own standards and objectives, it will be well to establish a definition of Religious Education and to propose normative objectives for realization through its curricula. Recognizing that there are different "schools"

1. McConnachie ibid. p 191.

2. McConnachie, ibid. p 192.

3. McConnachie, loc.cit.



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This summarizes the constructive corrective of Barth for the present system of religious education which he attacks as essentially as being Humanistic and anthropocentric. Before we seek to evaluate the contribution to religious education in terms of our standards and objectives, it will be well to establish a definition of religious education and to propose normative objectives for realization through its practice. He acknowledges that there are different "schools"

1. McConachy, *ibid.*, p. 191.
2. McConachy, *ibid.*, p. 192.
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of Religious Education, the ~~co~~ <sup>con</sup>ception considered here will be that represented by the "Boston School", (as differentiated, for example, from the "Chicago School", which is influenced by John Dewey's ~~Positiv~~ <sup>ism</sup> ~~ism~~, and the material used is that presented and studied in the course offered by Dr. Marlatt at the Boston University School of Theology, entitled, "Principles of Moral and Religious Education."

Before we attempt to ascertain directly what the aims of a program of religious education ought to be, let us first consider education in the general sense of the word. Soares defines education as,

"The directed process of helping growing persons to develop progressively those habits skills, attitudes, knowledges, appreciations, and ideals which will enable them at each stage of their progress to achieve an evermore integrated personality and to live competent and satisfying lives in this physical environment and as co-operative members of an ongoing and improving human society." 1.

In this definition it is obvious that there are two aspects of education which must be considered. That it is a continuously progressive process is apparent; but it is also a process which is so organized that at each stage of the individual's development it produces the measurable socialized person, though that person may be immature. Such a system of education will produce,

"habits which are desirable ways of acting that need no deliberation; skills which will be the abilities to do whatever is necessary in efficient living; attitudes, which will be desirable emotional reactions in the situations that develop; knowledges, which will be bodies of usable in-

1. Soares, Religious Education, p.XX.



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formation; appreciations, which will be the feelings of value of all that the growing person should experience; and ideals which will be the picture of conduct nobler than is customary. Each of these will be conditioned by the maturity, interest, and social experience of the growing person." 1.

Thus "the aim of education is competent and satisfying life in the physical environment," 2. but its higher aim is "to develop growing persons as co-operative members or an ongrowing and improving human society." 3.

But what do we mean by "religion"? A definition of religion must contain provisions for several different elements, for religion consists of a number of elements.

"It is a relationship of conscious dependence on higher powers; it makes a demand on the whole of man's life, intellect, emotion, and will; it is both individual and social; it is worship, yet it is more than worship; and it conserves all the values which give worth and meaning to human life. The definition which includes all these features as successfully as any, is that of L. de Grandmaison: 'Religion is the sum total of beliefs, sentiments, and practices, individual and social, which have for their object a power which man recognizes a supreme on which he depends, and with which he can enter (or has entered) into relation.' 4.

This "object" must satisfy certain emotional needs and man's efforts to come into harmony with it lead him to the creation of, and conservation of, values.

Obviously, therefore, religious education must be the directed process of assisting growing persons to achieve progressively the experiences and values defined as religious.

"Cope maintains that all education is religious education because it deals with persons who are by nature religious, and it deals with them for

1. Soares, *ibid*, p.XX.
2. *Ibid*, p. XVI.
3. Soares, *ibid*, p.XIV.
4. Soper, Religions of Mankind, p. 25.



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1. Science, 1914, p. XX.
2. Ibid., p. XVI.
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4. Cope, Religion of Manhood, p. 25.



the ultimately religious purpose of helping them to live in a world of spiritual beings." 1.

And Vieth says that,

"the content of religious education is religion itself. It is not possible to describe the meaning of religious education apart from the conception of religion, which is implied in the term. Religion is an essential and inalienable ingredient of human experience." 2.

Consequently,

"religious education is related in kind to the process of education in general. Its distinguishing criterion is that it has for its purpose the making of religious persons and the fostering of religious living." 3.

Religious education, then, is an integration of religious ideals with educational methods. Soares gives four specific aims which this integrated process may have:

1. "Fellowship in the life of the religious group: sharing its practices, its worship, its ideas, its hopes, its ideals, its moral purposes."

2. "Purpose and ability to criticize the life of the religious group with reference to its contribution to the socialization of life. The result of this criticism is to make the higher socialization, thus conceived, effective within the possibilities of the learner."

3. "Skill in the deliberative determination of conduct with social purpose and religious motive."

4. "Personal experience of rapport with the Eternal that may give the highest meaning to personal life as worthwhile in its self and its contribution to social ends." 4.

Paul H. Vieth gives seven aims which he considers to be necessary objectives for a program of religious education. They are in practical agreement with the ones from Soares,

1. Vieth, Objectives in Religious Education, p. 8.
2. *ibid*, p.10.
3. *ibid*, p.5.
4. *ibid*, p.XVII.



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"The aim of religious education is religious formation itself. It is not an end in itself. The meaning of religious education must be seen in the concept of religion, which is implied in the term. Religion is an essential and integral part of human experience." 2.

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Religious education, then, is an integration of religious ideals with educational methods. Soares gives four specific

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1. "Religion is a part of the life of the religious group: sharing its practices, its worship, its ideas, its hopes, its ideals, its moral purposes."
2. "Purpose and activity to crystallize the life of the religious group with reference to its contribution to the socialization of life. The result of this crystallization is to make the religious socialization, thus conceived, effective within the socialization of the learner."
3. "Skill in the deliberative determination of conduct with social purposes and religious motive."
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2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. XVII.



but because they seem to emphasize a little more strongly the religious elements I wish to quote them here:

1. "To foster in growing people a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience, and a sense of personal relationship to him.
2. "To lead growing persons into an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teachings of Christ.
3. "To foster in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christlike character.
4. "To develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the building of a social order embodying the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man.
5. "To lead growing persons to build a life philosophy on the basis of a Christian interpretation of life and the universe.
6. "To develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in the organized society of Christians - the Church.
7. "To effect in growing persons the assimilations of the best religious ~~experiences~~ of the race, as effective guidance to present experience." (1.0)

Dr. Marlatt's own conclusion is that religious education "must perform a six-fold function:

1. Impart information:
2. Form certain habits:
3. Increase certain powers:
4. Discourage certain tendencies:
5. Arouse interest:
6. Inspire ideals. " 2.

The definition of religious education which he had developed provides the technique for realizing these objectives:

1. Vieth, *ibid.* pp. 80-81.
2. Marlatt, *Outline for course*, p.5.



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3. Increase certain powers;
4. Discourage certain tendencies;
5. Arouse interest;
6. Inspire ideals." 2.

The definition of religious education which he

had advanced provides the technique for realizing these

objectives:



"Religious Education is the application of sound psychological, pedagogical, sociological metaphysical, and theological principles to the production of character, the conversion of desires into values or the process by which desires are so deepened as to yield the higher values; the introduction of God into experience in such a way as to develop ideals, ethical conduct...persons." 1.

That Karl Barth can have but little sympathy for such a program is obvious from the earlier discussion in this paper of his own principles for religious education. It comes under the ban of all three of his objection, with the exception noted concerning the Cartesian autonomy to which he objects. Nevertheless, Barth's own emphases in Religious Education do have a value for such a system as is proposed by Drs. Marlatt, Athearn, Soares, and others.

The four qualifications which Barth insists that the teacher of Religious Education must have are well taken, though they are too limited as Barth proposed them. One who would be a teacher of Religious Education ought to be such a Christian character as Barth implies in his first qualification. His own life ought to reflect the value and meaning of that which he is teaching; he ought to have an adequate conception of the weaknesses and strength of the nature of Man; ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> certainly ought to be well grounded in the scriptures; and he must have an adequate knowledge of the principles of child psychology. The import of these qualifications is their insistence that the teacher be one who is thoroughly grounded and trained in the theoretical and practical aspects of Religious Education.

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A second value which Barth has to offer us is in his insistence that Religious Education must be theocentric. Here the value is one of caution and warning. In our attempts to make all manner of materials adaptable to the system of Religious Education, there is a danger that we may lose sight of the Goal in making paths attractive and interesting. Barth's insistence that only that may be used which testifies to the Good is a corrective measure against the tendency to humanize the materials used.

A third value which Barth contributes is involved in his Biblicism. While the emphasis which he places upon the Bible as the sole repository of Religious Truth, is excessive, it is well that we should have his reminder that the Bible is the only Book expressly written for the purpose of revealing to us the "Good News of God." Our secularization of materials for use in Religious Education programs has been away from, rather than toward, the Bible as the primary source of our Religious Education lessons. Consequently, this return to the Bible as the corner-stone of such programs is a contribution to which we may turn with acceptance.

These Religious Educational values in the teachings of Karl Barth are only of corrective and cautionary significance, however, even as the theology of Barth has a similar value to the theology of our day. The difference between the two systems of Religious Education is traceable to the difference in theological belief. The Totally Otherness of

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God championed by Barth is a reaction against a too excessive emphasis upon the Immanence of God which makes God but an extension of Man. In asserting such a Complete antithesis between God and Man as he does, Barth necessarily leans backward in his insistence that there is no way whatever from Man to God. And so long as the Barthian Theology hinges on that extreme transcendence of God and the absolute incapacity of man ever to apprehend or comprehend God, it does not seem to me to have any vital contribution to make to our system of Religious Education. Such a statement is in no wise an attempt to deny the theological significance of the Barthian movement. As has been noted it has definite and well-taken criticisms of current theological tendencies. But that we can turn to it and discover therein a substitute for our present system of Religious Education, or even an important addition to it, does not appear evident to me.

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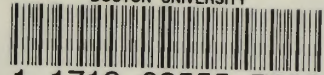
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